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METHODISM AS IT SHOULD BE;

OR,

Opinion on the Constitution of a Christian Church in accordance with the Divine Scriptures.

ADDRESSED TO THE PEOPLE CALLED METHODIST.

By "ELIHU."

"They received the Word with all Readiness of Mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those Things were so."—Acts XVII, 2,—"Comparing spiritual things with spiritual."—1 *Cor.* II, 13.

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ERRATA.—

In page 232, 10th line from foot, for "*obligations*" read "*oblations.*"

In page 232, 9th line from foot, for "*oblation*" read "*obligation.*"

To the Man of God, JAMES CAUGHEY, Preacher of the Gospel, in connexion with the Methodist Episcopal Churches, in the United States of America,—the present work is inscribed, as an expression of more than common esteem, on account of his Mission to these lands, and of the value placed upon his successful work of faith, and labour of love among us,—as proving that while he was indeed disallowed of the "Wesleyan Conference" he was the "chosen of God, and precious."

BY THE AUTHOR.

What other more suitable occasion could he have of testifying his lively gratitude? A work which has avowedly for its object the making of our most holy religion more beloved, our Methodism more Scriptural, and consequently more useful and successful in the world, in accomplishing the designs of God in raising it up,—in reviving the *old* religion with *new* energy, did not that man of God so love this Methodism of ours, as to make for it the most generous sacrifice in visiting us? He consecrated the sacred office in which God had placed him, to promote a revival of pure religion among us as a people.

In giving this public testimonial to his devotion and zeal, it is with the conviction that many thousands of our Methodist people would not hesitate to follow the same steps, for whilst that extraordinary Minister of God was treated over here by his brethren in the ministry somewhat like unto his Divine Master, when "*He came unto his own, and his own received him not, and held a council against him how they might destroy him,*" so did the Wesleyan Conference reject him, closing the door against him as an enemy, and with a sentiment of disgrace, "*Away with him, away with him, unto the place from whence he came*"; yet "*the common people heard him gladly,*" he found the way to their hearts, and whilst memory lasts he will live in their sympathising and grateful affections. Yes! "we give thanks to God always for him, making mention of him in our prayers."

But that man of God, knowing where his strength lay, needed not our sympathy, for he, in his last and most severe conflict while with us, was saved from putting confidence in those from whom he might have hoped much better things, and, notwithstanding his cruel disappointment, he triumphed over the fear of his strong and unnatural opponents, thus candidly and fearlessly, "I have nothing to *expect* from the Conference, and I have nothing to *fear* from it." And therefore it would appear that we are called on no longer to weep for James Caughey, but to weep for ourselves, and for our children, and for our beloved and all but ruined Methodism. Knowing nothing of Mr. Caughey's views on Church Government, as he interfered not with its administration, yet, notwithstanding, the willing support of such a man, if required, might be calculated on, were it necessary, to conserve and preserve the doctrines and sentiments held by the late John Wesley, viz.:—"That the Methodist Preachers were raised up to promote a reformation, and to spread Scriptural holiness throughout the land,"—and inasmuch as it is written, "Upon all the glory *shall* be a defence."

It is a gratification to know that an honorable public testimonial to the character of Mr. Caughey's ministerial labors in these lands has heretofore been accorded for the truth's sake, and encouragement in the work in which we are now engaged. Therefore we now desire to give to those sentiments, however variously expressed, a special prominence, inasmuch as he assumed the aggressive wherever the kingdom of Satan could be assailed, whether within or without

the Church, manifesting that he was a "wise master-builder."

To create a new element in Wesleyan Methodism required a new material to give a new phase to its existence, and suitable men for the accomplishment of special purposes, are always raised up by Him who is the head over all things, and Supreme Ruler in the Church. Extraordinary men are the outbirths of their time, and they come, not by chance, but by the appointment of God,—they are "raised up" to do a great work. God makes use of his chosen instruments as a focus where influences are gathered, and from whence they are to be distributed for the regeneration and moral benefit of others.

When such an instrument ceases to operate, there must be a cause, but the cause cannot be in the first moving cause. In all the various changes of the Christian Church we see the hand of God regulating, directing, and controlling the various mechanism which that mighty hand has set in motion. And who can say to Him what doest thou? Was there not a cause? Was not the first introduction of Methodism by John Wesley succeeded by years of comparative darkness, relative to some of the essentials of Christianity, and apparent retrogression?

At length James Caughey arose, the instrument of Providence, to shake off the fetters of a corrupt and slumbering ministry, and prepare the way for a more successful and universal spread of the great work of redemption. He is the remarkable man of the age,—the instrument raised up by God for the accomplishment of a mighty purpose, and by his preaching and accompanying services, he laid a firm foundation for the reformation, and to spread abroad the great work of redemption. He was the first to strike out a new path from the old beaten track of Methodism;—the first boldly and effectually to reprove the unsound state of the Wesleyan Church, its formalities and indifference, and to arouse the slumbering energies of its members. He brought an influence to bear upon the Church, which answered the design intended. A simple-hearted, humble-minded, God-fearing, man-loving ministry was his, calculated for the healing of the nations.

He was a "Teacher sent from God," full of holy fire and heavenly light, and he carried that fire and light into the comparatively dark, cold Wesleyan Churches, and by his power and influence gave a new bias to the people. Was not God in the movement? Was he not with James Caughey, who, by his pious and self-denying exertions, has raised

himself to be a blessing to the Church, and also to the world.

When James Caughey visited the Wesleyan body in these lands, a new material might have been introduced into the system. But was this the case? The four years of Mr. Caughey's sojourn in these lands was spent in gathering into the church of the living God thousands of the outcasts of the world, and of renovating the existing and defective churches in Methodism. An eternal blot rests on the character of that Conference which stopped him in his holy career, and sent him hence as a fellow not worthy to live in this island.

Mr. Caughey, it must be remembered, came to this country on leave of absence, being a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America. He could not boast that he was deputed by the American Conference to the Wesleyan Methodist, nor of being invited by the latter, but he was convinced that he was deputed by the great Head of the Church to visit the Wesleyan Methodists. And, accordingly, religious services in the Wesleyan Chapels were conducted by him in most of the principal towns with amazing success. There was an uncommon fascination about his preaching, which, as a holy man of God, was not quite unaccountable. Many thousands were converted under Mr. Caughey's instrumentality, and became members of the Methodist Church.

After occupying the pulpits of the Wesleyan Chapels for four years or more, some of the ministers, it appears, objected to the movements of Mr. Caughey, as being irregular and contrary to the usages of Methodism, notwithstanding that his occupying of the pulpits and chapels was under their own control, and subject to their jurisdiction.

At the Conference of 1846, minutes were read from some of the District Meetings, to the effect that Conference should put a stop to such irregularities. The subject was discussed in Conference at great length, resulting in closing the chapels against him,—and also that a letter should be addressed to the Bishop of the American Conference, requesting the withdrawal of Mr. Caughey from England. And all this, *not* that Mr. Caughey had refused submission to ecclesiastical supervision, responsibility, or control, while in England; and it appears from Mr. Caughey's statement, that the "authorities in this country had never requested him to join the Wesleyan Church, and thus act under and in accordance with its usages, an act which he (Mr. C.) would not have objected to." And he concludes thus, "I shall cause no disturbance in the

Wesleyan Connexion: God did not send me to England for such a purpose. That he did send me, and has been with me, I firmly believe, whatever others may think to the contrary, notwithstanding."

"Whether I have made full proof of my ministry, and of that 'call' since my arrival on these shores, modesty dictates I should leave others to decide."

Whether Conference did right or wrong in sending away this useful, laborious, and God-honoured Minister, we shall not hesitate to pause in the course of the present work to express our conviction. Mr. Caughey had evidently won the affections of the Methodist people. He might have produced a serious disruption had there been anything in his conduct contrary to peace and unity. But we must maintain that education, science, and learning, but above all vital Christianity, are the honoured and powerful advocates of reform. It would appear that the President and Secretary of the Conference inherited a large portion of the ill-feeling and bitter invectives resulting from this unhappy movement,—a movement which very seriously affected the Conference's popularity with a large majority of the Wesleyan people,—the merited popular censure.

And thus we would honour James Caughey, the man of God, for his work's sake.—*Elihu.*

INTRODUCTION.

When this subject was first commenced, it was designed for a newspaper; but its rejection in that medium of communication is the cause of its appearing in the present extended and more durable form.—Besides, taking a broad view of a broad case, "words lost on the ears of the living, are not always lost for history"; and "deliberate long upon what you can do but once" is a maxim worth remembering.

Solitude is favourable to self-delusions. Many a bright theory has flashed through the mind of the solitary student, which would have been impossible in practice. The sanguine temperament of the recluse very often imposes upon him, and what in fancy seemed morally certain, has frequently turned out a delusive meteor. Lively fancies run riot in the realms of fiction, and mistake their own erratic flights for the solid conclusions of judgment. A thought savouring of newness, and partially warranted by circumstances, crosses the mind, and we straightway begin to build up a most imposing fabric, when suddenly an *afterthought* arises, and down comes the air-built structure, leaving "not a wreck behind." The common saying that "Rome was not built in a day," is applicable in more senses than one;—time is required in all great reforms,—extensive alterations and modifications in the moral and physical world demand time and deliberation.—While we condemn the snail-paced progress of some, we must equally censure the thoughtless precipitancy of others. We have been led, brethren, into this train of thought, when recalling to mind the present aspect of Methodist affairs. We confess we are not, on a candid consideration, so sanguine of a thorough and immediate Reform as some appear to be. At the same time we may remark that no man can be more anxious to see that reform than the obscure individual who now addresses you. Our notion is, that any system, moral, political, or religious, that has been long established, and firmly rooted in the minds of thousands, however corrupt that system may be, and in whatever need of amendment, is not easily got rid of, but frequently requires ages for its removal or effective re-modelling. The progress of despotism is sometimes so imperceptible, that we fancy ourselves on free

ground, when, all the while, our chains are being fast rivetted around us. When the iron grasp becomes palpable to sense, we wonder how and whence it had derived its power. On looking deeper into the matter, we find the cause to have been in our own wilful blindness and supineness. If we wish to perpetuate our freedom, our vigilance should be perpetual, and every measure with the semblance of injustice should be crushed in its rise. This would be very easy at first, but when such measures become matured and ripened, and identified with general principles, then the task of abolition too often becomes a difficult one, and pregnant with inconvenience and reproach. We may aver, without in the least departing from truth, that the influence of the Methodist officials, *local* as well as stationed, has been gained by a gradual process. Formerly, in Wesley's time, they were nothing; in times past, they would not,—durst not—have attempted measures which they now do without scruple. Had the private members acted a more vigilant part, insisted more peremptorily on being heard, the present bearing of the officials would, necessarily, have been widely different from what it now is. The people themselves are to blame, for not crushing the monster in its shell, instead of permitting it to grow to such an offensive magnitude as *official despotism*. The principles of disorder and corruption are discernable in the constitution under its best and most perfect form. They soon unfold themselves, and spreading with rapidity through every part of the system, produce the most fatal effects. To crown all, time gradually fixed, and in some sort rendered venerable, the pernicious system which violence had established. The Christian religion, though its precepts are delivered, and its institutions are fixed in Scripture, with a precision which should have exempted them from being misinterpreted or corrupted, degenerated during the years of darkness, into an illiberal superstition.—The spirit of domination corrupted the officials, the yoke of slavery depressed the people, the generous sentiments inspired by a sense of equality were extinguished. Time ripened those original seeds of corruption, and gave birth to new disorders. A constitution unsound and worn out, must have fallen to pieces of itself, without external shock. Relative to Church government, such transactions tending to illustrate the progress of its constitution, laws, or manners, merit the utmost attention.

Perhaps we may have done well to be still for a season, to

satisfy ourselves, by acquiring somewhat more experience, before we ventured to commit ourselves in public. It is a dangerous thing to be hasty in affirming a novelty,—it should be well investigated. But "Hereditary Bondsmen! know you not, who would be free, himself must strike the blow." For good thoughts are as useless as good dreams, if they are suffered to remain thoughts only; therefore we are forced to act at last,—"better late than never." We conceive that we are now required to act worthily and bravely in the cause of truth, right, and liberty, in behalf of Methodism,—bidding an indignant defiance to every unworthy opponent, especially to every *official despot* in the Methodist churches.

It would be well if such persons as shrink even from the peaceful agitation of controversy, and who would prefer moral stagnation to the troubling of the waters, would consider our Lord's declaration,—"Suppose ye that I am come to give peace? I tell ye nay, but rather division."

As the work of Church Reform is the most arduous and difficult, as well as the most spiritual and holy, of all the duties of the Christian Church; the true reforming spirit is the fullest measure of what the Apostle describes as the "spirit of power and of love, and of a sound mind." It is, in the first place, the spirit of a sound mind,—an intelligent and discriminating spirit, which carefully distinguishes between the right and the wrong, the true and the false, in matters of religion, and treats every subject according to its real merit. It is not the feeble and doting Conservative spirit, which dares not remove acknowledged abuse, lest, perchance, it should endanger something that is sound. Nor is it the reckless Destructive spirit, which, in its eager haste to remove what is wrong, would confound and destroy right and wrong, true and false, together. No, it puts a wide difference between the wood, the hay, and the stubble, which have been heaped upon the foundation of Christianity, and the gold, the silver, and the precious stones, which form the foundation themselves, and while it proposes utterly to destroy and consume the former, it will, with the utmost solicitude, preserve and defend the latter. This we trust will be the spirit of the Church Reform in which we are engaged.

As various meanings may be attached to the term "opinion," it may be found necessary to distinguish them, ere we proceed with the work itself. It may imply a persuasion of the mind, without proof or certain knowledge, hence the term, "matter

of opinion" or notion, which may imply a thought, an idea, or representation of anything in the mind, and which may imply an empty or groundless opinion. But the word may also imply that power of the mind whereby we join ideas together, by affirming or denying anything concerning them, the quality or power of discerning the propriety and impropriety of things, the right, power, or act of passing sentence or decision ;—and therefore opinions should be formed and received judiciously and cautiously.

As there may be a distinction, without a material difference, on some subjects, we should distinguish between them as a check to presumption, and to prevent confusion. There may be a subject which has only to be known and understood in order to be received as an opinion already formed. Such is the constitution of the christian church, that being formed or framed at one and the same period, when Christianity itself was founded, and by one and the same authority. Hence the last declaration and command of Jesus Christ to his disciples before his ascension, " All power is given unto me in Heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and, lo ! I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen."

There are two distinct modes of looking at the gospel of Christ. At least, the philosophy of some persons has sanctioned the long-established custom of looking at the doctrines of Christ and the government of his church as if they were really two distinct modes of looking at his authority.

Were men really wise, and not sectarians, or one-sided thinkers, there would be only one mode of looking at the authority and government of God in the gospel of his Son, and they would see plainly his government in his doctrine, and his doctrine in his government. But men are not wise, and therefore they must continue to think and to look at the doctrine as one thing, and to the work of government as another. Hence in the present state of mental reason on theology and religion the distinction is made necessary. While it is acknowledged that the scriptures are the rule of faith in respect of its doctrines, yet it is contended for, that the scriptures do not lay down any specific plan for church government—that in this respect the scriptures are not always to be taken in their literal sense—yea, moreover, that the

meaning of the term church remains to be settled. So at least it is acknowledged that there is a church of God, and that it must be governed—but by what laws? And by whom? So it would appear that this remains to be settled also. But Jesus Christ hath settled that matter more than eighteen hundred years since, notwithstanding, that he says to his eleven disciples, "all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Thus he claims all the power and authority by which both empires are governed. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." Because I have the authority aforesaid, and can send whomsoever I will, to do whatsoever I please, teach, make disciples of all nations. "Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you." They were to teach them, not their own, or any man's fancies and inventions, but the truths and institutions of Christ. As Christ does not here command anything to be taught which he himself had not taught, it may be inferred that everything fundamental and essential to the church may be found in the gospels, and that even the Apostles themselves had not a right to teach anything as necessary to salvation or the government of the church, which Christ himself had not asserted to be so.

To make the doctrines of Christ the rule of our faith, and his commands the directory of our practice, we are *under the law to Christ*, and must obey, and do what we do as unto the Lord. *To observe all things* that he hath commanded, without exception, all the moral duties, and all the instituted ordinances. Our obedience to the laws of Christ is not sincere, if it be not universal, we must *stand complete* in his whole will. And this is the duty of the Christian Church in all ages. Hence—"And, lo! I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen."

But it cannot be literally and strictly true that Jesus Christ formed Methodism, even Methodism as it should be in accordance with the divine scriptures, as a constitution for his church, for while the principle should be precisely the same, there may be a circumstantial difference, something that happens besides the main design, and yet not contrary to it. And under similar circumstances we are not only called on to form an opinion for ourselves, but to be cautious in doing it. Hence the exhortation of the Apostle "despise not prophesying. Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." *Prove all things*, whatever you hear, examine by the

words of Christ. "Try the spirits"—the different teachers, by the word of God. There were teachers even at that period who professed to be of God, and yet were not. "Hold fast that which is good." Whatever in these teachings has a tendency to increase our holiness and usefulness, that we should receive and hold fast. And, by the same disparity of doctrine, which will hold good, we should throw away that which is bad. And, therefore, it is perceivable that it may become both laudable and lawful to take from or add to the circumstantials of Methodism—hence, conflicting opinions may arise, and be silenced—and from which we Methodists may be led into a wide field of controversy, if not speedily satisfactorily recognised, or *rudely cut short.*

Methodism, in its form of church government, being one of those subjects wherein differences of opinion have existed, from its commencement up to the present period, beginning with John Wesley, and continued with his successors in the ministry on the one part, and the other members of the Methodist Church on the other part. And not arriving at any permanent reconciliation, and the former party having rudely cut short all controversy by making and enforcing the following law, which was enacted in 1796, "Let no man or number of men in our connexion, on any account or occasion, call meetings, circulate letters, do, or attempt to do, anything new, until it has been first appointed by the Conference." And thus all reasoning being lost on the Wesleyan Conference, who had become *factotum* in the government of Methodism, nothing remained for the second party but an immediate and complete *revolution*—whether that step has been taken or not—however, one step has been taken in the right direction by professed reformers, viz., "stopping the supplies," which has been partially attempted. But nothing being done, or at all likely to be done effectually, by *professed reformers,* is the more immediate cause of the present production.

Like causes produce like effects. The local official reformers having made *themselves* the factotum of the reform movement, to effect a change suitable to *their own taste,* in opposition to the *people's* interest, and rudely closing the accustomed medium of information on reform matters to the private members, thus setting the people at defiance, like unto the Wesleyan Conference in their "Let no man, &c.," which, if not in the exact form, is in resemblance so striking,

that there is no mistaking or scarcely distinguishing the one from the other,—except, that the portrait of the latter is drawn in *darker* shades, which become the more conspicuously disagreeable and mischievous, as standing in the spurious imitation or pretended borrowed light of reform—hence, practically, with a conform, the second edition of "Let no man, or number of men, in our *Reform Connexion*, on any account or occasion, call meetings, circulate letters, do, or attempt to do, anything new, until it has been first appointed by the General Reform Committee, or the Annual Assembly." And thus all reasoning is at an end with the Wesleyan Official Reformers also, and nothing remains for the people but the effect of that cause, viz. :—a *two-fold revolution*, or reform of professed reformers. And here, afresh, and stronger than ever, we take a dead stand,—it is *victory* or *death* with us the private members.

No doubt but some parties may be satisfied with the present state of things, but are *you* content with the following *facts*?

The "Wesleyan Times," which the people support, it being the professed organ of communication for reformers,—what think you of its professions being perverted by the official reformers, in the heat of the agitation, in 1855, they having obtained a complete control over that journal, and of their exercising it therein to the exclusion of the private members' interest? We deem it expedient to state some few facts in reference thereto, in this stage of the introduction, viz. :—14th February, 1850, the following note was sent to the Editor of the "Wesleyan Times";—"Sir,—Herewith I send you some little matter on Wesleyan Reform, for insertion in your Journal; for the present I give you my name and address in confidence. The gentleman by whom this will be delivered knows me personally. An early insertion will oblige yours respectfully, *Elihu.*"

Relative to the article now referred to, "Elihu" sent a summary and abridgment, which contained the substance of the whole in a small compass.

Again in July, 1852, "Elihu" wrote to the Editor of the "Wesleyan Times," as follows :—"Sir,—I wish to ascertain if you can allow me, through the medium of your Journal, to address the members of the Methodist Churches on the subject of Methodistical Reform. This request has been occasioned by your recent notice to Subscribers, that a total change had taken place in the Editorial department. If free opinions, on

Methodistical Reform, are to be admitted without partiality and without restriction, so far as they may be within scriptural bounds, then that would prove a great and necessary change indeed.

"I sent an article on Methodistical Reform to the "Wesleyan Times" in the early part of the year '50. The Editor then promised it a place, but after the lapse of some months, refused it, without any other excuse than—"the new creed is not quite to our taste"—*Notice to Correspondents.* Why! It did not enter into the thoughts of the writer to consult the *taste* of the Editor, or any official class whatever, in their official capacity. His object was to consult the taste of the members of the church, as such, without distinction—on the ground of equality—in accordance with the following sentiment,—"That the basis of a plan for a reformation of existing abuses in Methodism, should be the principle of the right of interference, on the part of the members of the Church, in the regulation of all its affairs,"—this, we presume, being founded on the Scriptures, both as to its principle and detail. "One is your Master, *even* Christ, and all ye are brethren." "Tell it unto the Church,"—*St. Matthew.* Therefore, as an honest writer, I should not hesitate to state what I well knew to be "not quite to the taste" of any individual or set of individuals,—those individuals having the same right and liberty to pass their own opinions on my views on the subject. But it might have been more convenient to the Editors, and their principal supporters, to exercise their power by shutting out certain opinions altogether. However, if the door of Providence is now sufficiently open for us, we should then regard it as a duty to walk in, but if not, then we should not attempt to force it open by any compromise of essential truth —the equal rights of the people—but should abide our time.

"Lest this should appear singular and uncalled for, I might just observe, that there does *exist*, among professed reformers themselves, a *manifest* difference of opinion on the great subject at issue, as to the extent and ruinous consequence of its errors and corruption, and as to the essential extent of the reform required, calling for a free and unrestricted interchange of ideas on the subject, in order that the work might not have to be done over and over again, and in some manner, "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." And yet, with suitable training, we do conceive that the people are capable of understanding their own

rights, and then—knowledge proving to be power—the end may triumphantly be answered on a sound and secure basis. This is all that is now sought for, and pray what have honest men to fear? And as to the manner, editors need not commit themselves to the views of correspondents, however extreme their opinions might be. In order to keep themselves entirely free, a general notice might be given, similar to that in the late *Christian Advocate:*—"The Editors wish it to be distinctly understood that, although it is their desire that this Journal should freely express the opinions of their correspondents, they (the Editors) are not to be considered as responsible for such opinions." Would not this be a better plan than throwing certain opinions among rejected copy? By the bye, I would give some pounds to have a perusal of all the *rejected* copy. "I said, days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom. But *there is* a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding. Great men are not *always* wise; neither do the aged understand judgment. Therefore I said, hearken to me, I also will show mine opinion," i e., if your humble servant may be allowed the privilege, which has heretofore been refused him—*Elihu.*'"

In reply to which, the following notice was promptly given, "Elihu—Communications will certainly not be rejected, merely because they are *not to our taste,*—sentiments may often be expressed in correspondence to which we should demur, but we are not to be considered responsible for all the opinions of our correspondents." Here we flattered ourselves was a fair opening,—but just at that time "Elihu," meeting with a severe accident, which incapacitated him for some considerable time from either thinking or writing on the subject, his article was not sent for insertion the second time, until Sept. 4th, '55, and being accompanied with the following note,—"To the Editor of the *Wesleyan Times,*—Sir,—In July, '52, I wrote you, requesting to know if I might be at liberty, through the medium of the *Wesleyan Times,* to address the members of the Methodist Churches, on the subject of Methodistical Reform, without distinction, without partiality, and without restriction,—assigning my reason. That having sent an article for insertion to the ex-Editor for insertion, in the year '50, it was rejected with 'the new creed is not quite to our taste,'—to which request you promptly replied, as I understood, in the affirmative; for which I now return you

thanks. But just at that time, I met with a severe accident, which incapacitated me for some considerable time from either thinking or writing,—but am now so far recovered as to send you my first article for insertion. I enclose you my card, with name and address, in confidence, but not for publication. —I am, Sir, yours faithfully, *Elihu.*—P.S.—I have to observe that the long delay has not been wholly occasioned by the accident, but principally from the conceived importance, and the peculiar delicacy and difficulty of the subject itself, and that increasingly so, the more I know of and think on the connecting and existing circumstances,—*Elihu.*"—To which the following reply was received, per *Notice to Correspondents*, September 10th, 1855.—"*Elihu*,—Much too long for our space." Again, September 12th, 1855,—"To the Editor of the *Wesleyan Times*,—Sir,—In reply to the *notice* in your last publication,—'*Elihu*,—Much too long for our space."—Should there be no other objection to the insertion, could not that be obviated by dividing the article for two publications, as then it might not exceed a column and a half in each? Your obedient servant, *Elihu.*"—To this no notice was taken. Again, September 19th, 1855,—"To the Editor of the *Wesleyan Times*,—Sir,—Having written to you last week, relative to your notice, referring to my article sent you 4th instant, and no notice being taken of it, I now request to know if the article would be inserted as an advertisement, and if so what would be the charge per column for my articles on the subject. An answer per the enclosed envelope, will oblige your obedient servant, *Elihu.*" Reply per Notice—"*Elihu*, —We have handed his letter to our publisher." About *four weeks* after that, the publisher's reply came to hand, stating that the charge for advertising the article "will be at the rate of three guineas per column." In reply to which, October 19th, '55,—"To Mr. Wm. B. King. Sir,—In yours of the 17th instant, relative to *Elihu's* article, that "there would be no objection to the *article* appearing as an advertisement, the charge for which will be at the rate of three guineas per column," *Elihu* wishes to know if the whole of his *articles* on the subject should thus appear without restriction, and without note or comment from the Editor of the *Wesleyan Times*, as it being purely a business transaction, for which he would have to pay about one hundred pounds, and therefore could not admit of foreign interference. Your answer per enclosed envelope, will oblige your obedient servant, *Elihu*," We now give Mr. King's

reply verbatim. "The *Wesleyan Times* Office, 84, Fleet Street, London, 22nd October, 1855. "Dear Sir,—There would be no interference by the Editor with your letters or articles appearing as advertisements, (mark) unless statements were made which were not based on a correct knowledge of facts, or conclusions drawn which would involve personal reflections. These are contingencies, which, judging from the tone and spirit of the letter which you sent here some time back, are not likely to occur. I am, Dear Sir, yours truly, W. B. King." Mark this,—*Elihu's* articles would not be inserted, even as an advertisement, but on certain conditions,—"unless," &c.,—*i.e.* the officials might say yea or nay to anything and everything before the roll could pass muster. Let the Wesleyan Conference beat that if it can! We pause not *now* to dwell largely on those *facts*, but it cannot but remind us of "Satan rebuking sin,"—for what have been the proceedings of the official reformers, besides "personal reflections" against the Conference preachers for the last six or seven years! We knew our men too well to fall into their clumsy snare and awkward attempt at delusion, it was enough for us to know or to be satisfied that the *Wesleyan Times* at that *period*, in all its departments, was under the entire control of Reform Methodist Officials. And having lost all confidence in such like officials, henceforth we finished with their organ.

Are we required to respect this exclusiveness? At the same time, however, we expect them to respect the counterpart of their exclusiveness, produced by reaction in ourselves, which compels us to separate ourselves from those who separate themselves from us.

John Wesley separated himself from the people in his government of Methodism. The Wesleyan Conference, following Wesley in his government, has likewise separated itself from the Methodist Church,—and the professed *official* reformers of Methodism have also separated themselves from the *private* members. Incompatible principles naturally strive to extinguish one another. We are two separate parties, as incombinable as oil and water, and our present alienation is ascribable only to an inexorable law of religious conviction, an essential principle not to be compromised, which is far different from mere separate places of worship, which may be only a circumstance. And in taking our final adieu of the official organ as a medium of communication,—but! not so

of officials themselves,—*conclusions* will be drawn, which will involve "official reflections" in abundance,—God only knows the end of them. But they need not have feared from us as regards their precious persons, for we would not willingly have so demeaned ourselves as to write one of their names, except that of John Wesley, who, despot as he was, was not a hypocrite, but a candid despot, who, for a word speaking, without trial, judge or jury, would cut off your Methodistical head "above board," and make a boast of it. A bold little despot of a "fellow" was John, but not a hypocrite, he made no profession as a reformer,—he was a professed opponent to the rights and liberties of the people, both National and Ecclesiastical, and he acted in character. But ours shall be no soft impeachment of official despots under the *cloak of reform*,- that is not our policy, our policy shall be, like John Wesley, to act in character. And we coincide with the adage, that "principles are not modest," their nature is to domineer, and they will imperiously claim the benefit of their privilege; if other principles are found to offer any show of resistance, a fierce combat is at once commenced. A principle can only rest tranquil after it has gained the victory.

As Methodist Reformers, our determination throughout must be, "self-government in opposition to official-government,"—self-government or slavery,—slavery worse than death! When death comes we trust to be resigned to the messenger, but God forbid that we should dishonour heaven and disgrace earth by submitting to insolent petty usurpers, in the shape of church officials. We say self-government for the church, wherein such officials shall not exist—they must be either mended or ended! A new nature, new habits of thought and employment, in other words, an entirely new generation of men, with a different education from that of the past is indispensable, and to promote this new education is one of the main objects of the present work. There are circumstances that compel us to resort to strong measures. Can it be imagined for a moment that we would study the self-interest or pleasure of those officials in what we choose to do? Or do you suppose that any thing we could do would move them more than the efforts of a pigmy would move a giant! We are strengthened by the very intensity of our despair, and the fixedness of purpose that springs out of it. There is no longer an excuse for lingering or hesitating.

But we are now constrained to pause, to be somewhat more explicit on the rejection of those articles by the Official Reformers, in justification of our extreme views.

Those officials make a great boast of a *free press* to serve the cause of reform, but mark—those very officials, as a class, are *enemies* to a free press, of which we now offer additional proof. Witness the following leading article in the *Wesleyan Times* of the 2nd July, 1855, headed "The Wesleyan Times and the Reform Movement":—"The time has come when we must speak out pretty plain; and, unless we should do so now, the time would speedily come when we should be compelled to speak out plainer still. The simple truth is, that an attempt has been made, and not for the first time, to dictate to us. We have resisted all such attempts hitherto, and we will resist them still. Whoever therefore may think to influence our conduct by undue means, whether by intimidation or by cajolery, may as well spare themselves the trouble; for it will be utterly unavailing. Nay, more, if we have any further provocation of this sort, we will make all our readers as wise as ourselves; and it shall be known to everybody, who are the men and what are the means by whom and by which our independence is assailed.

"Let it be, once for all, then, well understood, that the *Wesleyan Times* comprehends its mission, and will suffer no man, or number of men, to stop it in the course it may deem best for the great objects which it has in view. It was a Methodist Reformer before any one of those, who audaciously presume to direct its movements, had done or suffered anything entitling them to the name. Do they suppose that the Journal which has made them what they are, and the agitation, to which they owe all their public importance, what it is, will crouch at their bidding, and stir or stay, speak or be dumb, only when they shall deign to give the word of command? Why, our readers would laugh them to scorn as we do, were we to mention one tithe of the ridiculous efforts that have been put forth to reduce this Journal from the high state of an independent and outspoken representative of free Methodism, to the mere bond-slave of this faction or the servile echo of that coterie.

"At present, however, we will illustrate the case by but a single example. One fine morning we received a visit from a very worthy gentleman, for whom individually we have the highest esteem, though nothing could exceed the contempt

we had for his errand on that occasion. Our excellent visitor, who had but to open his lips on any ordinary subject to interest us and obtain our ready attention, so far forgot what was due to himself as well as to us, as to undertake an embassy, the object of which was, to establish a regular board of censorship over us. It was impossible for articles to be written, he said, with greater perspicuity and force, editorially, we were everything that we ought to be, and the movement was infinitely indebted to us; but—but—our correspondence! Here did we not sometimes go astray? Would we not ourselves acknowledge that we had sometimes inserted letters of an injurious character? Had we, in short, any objection to let certain gentlemen see all our correspondence before any of it was published in the *Wesleyan Times?* He could assure us, that the proposal proceeded from no want of confidence in our sincerity or judgment, but solely from an anxious desire to protect the movement from any untoward publication. Perhaps even we would admit, that the persons whom he represented, had still better means of judging than ourselves what would, and what would not, be beneficial or otherwise.

"The reader must imagine for himself the indignation which rose within us at this very modest proposal. Our sincere regard for the courteous gentleman who had condescended to be the bearer of so insolent a message, scarcely enabled us to suppress the scorn and loathing with which it inspired us. Choking our wrath, however, as well as we could, we told him plainly, that so long as the *Wesleyan Times* should remain in the hands in which it then was, and had been, from the beginning of the Reform Movement, no man, or number of men, should ever share with us the responsibility of deciding what should or should not be published in its columns. It were needless to repeat the arguments used;—but our visitor went away a sadder and a wiser man than when he came. He perceived that he had allowed himself to be sent on a fool's errand, and acknowledged the force of those considerations by which we showed him the superiority of an independent journal, to a journal under the dictation of a company, everlastingly at odds among themselves.

"Were we to describe all that has occurred and been threatened, in consequence of the New Connexion Meeting across the water being reported by us, (though without note or comment,) we should astonish those simple souls who

fondly imagine that every man calling himself a Methodist Reformer, is necessarily a friend to the free utterance of opinion."

Yet, notwithstanding the Editor's exposure of, and protest against official craft, did those very same officials, within a few weeks from that period, contrive to get the entire control of the *Wesleyan Times,—just in time* finally to shut out *Elihu's* article.

We now proceed with the work itself, commencing with the "*rejected article,*" *verbatim.*

METHODIST REFORM,—EQUIVALENT TO A REVOLUTION.

Elihu's opinion on the Constitution of a Christian Church; or Methodism as it should be, in accordance with the Divine Scriptures. Addressed to the People called Methodist,—through the medium of the *Wesleyan Times.*

"How forcible are right words,"—hence on another subject of controversy it is written, and which may equally apply to the subject under consideration.—"I said days should speak, and multitudes of years should teach wisdom. But *there is* a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding. Great men are not *always* wise: neither do the aged understand judgment. Therefore I said, Hearken to me: I also will show mine opinion. Behold, I waited for your words: I gave ear to your reasons, whilst ye searched out what to say. I *said,* I will answer also my part, I also will show mine opinion. For I am full of matter, the spirit within me constraineth me."—*Elihu—Job.*

For any opinion which the writer may advance, on the subject in hand, he makes no other apology than the borrowed one now quoted. Uncalled for excuses he has none to offer;—not that he may not borrow ideas, and language to express them, when circumstances and necessity may require it,—he making no profession of originality, but only to "ask for the old paths;" he would not hesitate to beg or borrow from any source, sacred or secular, to assist in a legitimate cause.

On the subject now before us, it is the sincere aim of the writer to discuss every part with fairness and candour, and honestly, but in the spirit of "the Truth," which he more anxiously wishes to be taught than to teach, to exhibit what he believes to be the sense of the Holy Scriptures, to the authority of which he trusts he has unreservedly subjected all his own opinions. At the same time giving his reasons for his opinions, not independent of the Scriptures,—but he would, like

St. Paul, as his manner was, reasoning out of the Scriptures, "opening and alleging," *proving by citation.* Thus he would labour to apprehend the truth of God as far as possible in his own essential nature and attributes, through the light of his Spirit, and the medium of his own *revelation.*

But before we enter on this task, we beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, by whatever love you bear to God, to your fellow creatures, to your own souls, do not be desirous to know who writes, but consider what is written. If it be possible, throughout the controversy lay prejudice aside, give what is advanced a fair hearing, consider simply on each head, is this true or is it false? Is it right or is it wrong? If you ask "but in whose judgment?" we answer, in your own—testing it by those Scriptures which you profess to believe, our final appeal "to the law and to the testimony."

Before entering on the subject itself, we shall have to make some preliminary remarks, as a prevention from anything like abruptness, that such a subject be not taken up in haste by any one rightly interested. That being accomplished, it should not be supposed that these remarks are to be regarded as the conclusive or exclusive support which the subject itself may demand. Therefore the present remarks may be considered in the light of simple intimations, hereafter to be dealt with by extension, explanation, or confirmation. But these hints, considering the sacredness of the subject, require all plainness of speech, saying what is meant, and meaning what is said. At the same time avoiding direct personalities, where it can be done consistently.

In making a general remark, Methodism has now existed for more than a century;—yet never has "Wesleyan Methodism" caused such an extensive and deep dissatisfaction and concern in its connexion as it does at present, so much so, that its very vital existence may be considered in danger.—Hence the concern manifested, and the efforts making towards its rescue, in which work every real enlightened friend to Methodism has his heart devotedly engaged. And, as out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, so he cannot consent to remain neutral or idle. With those views he perceives that his first work is to inform himself, and then to act for himself, according to the best of his knowledge and understanding. So far good in that individual. It may be true that his knowledge might be defective, that his thoughts might not be clear, and that his judgment and opinions might be

erroneous, and consequently his action might be wrong, calculated to do more injury than good in the great common cause. And as this may be said of every individual member in the connexion, so it may show at once the propriety and necessity of an interchange of ideas and opinions, in order to a mutual co-operation in such a connexional system as Methodism, more especially in its agitation for reform.

Hence, the first particular remark is, that there is much theoretical wisdom afloat in separate particles in this reform agitation, that, for want of due combination, runs to waste, and is altogether in danger of being lost,—like water spilt upon the ground, that cannot be gathered up again, or like the early dew and morning cloud which pass away. Therefore our object is to gather up the fragments that nothing may be entirely lost,—to collect, to arrange, to combine and embody, so as to turn to practical and permanent account. Hence, the proposed subject itself, will appear in the form of declarable rules;—thus commencing where the Official Reformers have come to a comparative stand-still, or stuck fast during the last five or six years, notwithstanding their early "declaration of principles," as if those principles would not bear arrangement. The declaration of principles is not to be rejected, so far as it goes,—but, is there to be perceived no loop-hole in it, whereby truth and purity may escape, and error and corruption enter? Hence the present anxiety that the "declaration" become not the rule, with such a questionable exception,—for by it order never can be established, *i.e.* the order of security. A *defence* for the *glory*, which is to be held as essential in Methodistical Reform.

Who then, with such conflicting views, will be found to take the lead in the reform? An exclamation may escape, "what a question at this day! with the existence of such a host of talented, zealous, active official reformers!" At which, we ourselves, are not taken by surprise.

In the history of Methodism, ever and anon, parties bring before our eyes the standing topic of popular agitation—the rights of the people, and ever and anon we respond with our sympathies for the people oppressed, and with our acclamations for the heroes who attempt to deliver them. Thus sympathy is natural, it is the instinct of justice calling out for redress of human grievances. But though natural and just as a feeling, it may be wrapped up in a halo of mental delusion notwithstanding. On this subject we have a strong

opinion. The heart is a poor logician. It darts to its object, overleaping all reason, and may as well rest in error as truth.

It would indeed be miraculous, if the official system had in it any principle of self-reform, to render it less revolting in 1856 than it was in 1796. How very little the boasted love of justice is worth! Give us the man who loves justice to his opponents, as well as to himself and his party. It requires no virtue to claim your own rights and defend yourselves.

There is nothing so dangerous as the practice of shamming. This is something like the age of shams, and they are the source of innumerable heart-burnings. For they who practice shams themselves, must always be suspecting them in others, hence the uncomfortable state of suspicion in which we all drawl out our Methodistical reform agitation existence.

When we treat of a system of principle—a living principle, and which is distinguished from the *organic* form that is common to it, it is not the result of organization, for that "is no living principle, no active cause." An organ is an instrument. Organization therefore is nothing more than a system of parts so constructed and arranged, as to co-operate to one common purpose. It is an arrangement of instruments, and there must be *something beyond* to bring these instruments into action. Therefore opposition to organization is opposition to the principle itself under a cloak. Here the fundamental principle is practically rejected under false pretence. The principle of *equality* brought into operation in the Church is not supportable with some parties—hence the pretext of no organization. The principle may be dealt with in a ghostly way, but it must not be embodied, it would then become formidable, terrible; connivance might be used to cheat with the ghost, while with the body trickery might fail, hence the policy, it would appear, has been to keep at the utmost distance from danger, from the body, from *organization*. The despot can be played better without it, but these are secret things, therefore a blank has been preferred for the last five or six years, there is a policy in this. But our business is to thwart all such like pretence.

We have long struggled for resolution to utter startling truths, aad we gather boldness as we proceed. By all our sincerity, and the bright hopes of the future, we cannot forbear to warn against official habit—we know what we dread. We see a speck on the bright character of our reforming friends. It may spread and dim all its lustre. We all know

the fearful strength of habit, we cannot shake off the serpent when once its coils are around us—hence we conceive that we may have other work to engage our attention besides the discovery of the dark spot on the disc of our sun. We joined the reform movement with the most romantic and enthusiastic ideas of church felicity. Are those bright visions of bliss to be realised? Time, the great disenchanter, alone can answer. The love of power and rule is the passion and official habit, at which we have now hinted—against which repeated attempts at reform have been made. But! to what purpose? Is it necessary to go back and relate the history of those years which have elapsed since Wesleyan Methodism, with its bright side and dark speck, was presented as something triumphant to a confiding and devoted people, commencing with John Wesley's *official rule*, who continued to exercise an unlimited power, and trained his assistants to follow his steps after his decease. Was it not already seen that the dark speck had enlarged, throwing into gradual but deepening shade the original brightness, obscuring the sunshine of brotherly joy, converting the home of love into a prison-house of shame, and blighting, chilling, palsying, the *purest doctrines* and *noblest* purposes? The warning accents of different reformers were breathed in vain. That fatal habit had become a passion—a passion which, like the rising tide, grows deeper and higher, rolling onward and onward, till the land-marks of reason, and honour, and principle, are swept over by its waves—a tide that ebbs not but with ebbing life. The ruling passion being strong—even in death—till it was found, by fatal experience, that it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder; and we shuddered at its confirmation. Once and again it seemed as if the demon had withdrawn its unhallowed presence, unable to exist in the holy atmosphere that surrounded the appeals made to us, the people, "thus it is written." But! there may be a forethought which takes the shadow of coming events long before they become a reality. And by possibility, if not probability, the reformers may still find that, "man, weak man, dressed in a little brief authority, plays such fantastic tricks before high Heaven that make the Angels weep." Hence reform, not in name, our actions must be reform. There must be a *defence* for the *glory*.

Thus we are led to repeat the remark, the query, who will be found to carry out such a reform—let no individual's modesty be shocked—a pilot to weather official storm?

But a master mind may not always readily be discovered—nor yet always equally needed in great movements. There may have been a look out for some master mind equal to taking the lead in the Methodist Reform cause, but has such a one been found? It has been acknowledged that the leader in the opposition has long been discovered, that he is a well-known character. Yes, it may be, that a master mind in the cause of error and corruption may be more readily found, than one in the cause of truth and purity. But it has not only been considered, that it is not every right cause that depends on any master mind as an instrument to insure its success, but rather that there may be a need for caution against such trust in any individual or individuals. Thus, it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes, *even* the princes of his people. Moreover—thus saith the Lord, "cursed *be* the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord." Hence, "lean not on earth, 'tis but a reed at best, and oft a spear, on its sharp point peace bleeds and hope expires." But yet such a caution is not intended to hinder a fair interchange of ideas and opinions, but only to check an undue partiality. This leads us to another particular remark.

"It has been somewhat recently publicly asserted, that, "The Methodists have no leader, but that the people themselves are the leader." It is true, that all platform speeches and newspaper articles are not to be taken as so much gospel, none should be taken as such without due caution. But wherever great principles of truth are declared, they should be adhered to, and not treated as some amusing speech, or temporary written article. Now, after serious consideration of the sentiment, that "The Methodist Reformers have no leader, but, that the people are the leader,"—the writer acknowledges this to be his decided opinion. Therefore, he is anxious that the people themselves should not lose sight of it, should be brought to act on it, and not deviate from it whilst the reform mission remains to be accomplished and maintained. And therefore, Ye Methodist People, you are now called on to consider this fact, seriously to regard it as becoming your province to be the leader in this great reform movement—you may indeed expect that this professed province of yours should be called in question, and meet with no trifling opposition by some professed friends, as well as professed opponents to all reform. But as we proceed, you should

and must be prepared to stand your ground.—We shall not attempt to answer every anticipated objection in a preliminary article, but your first and constant concern should be, a preparation, to enable you to perform the work itself, becoming your province—not a little task this with all the means within your reach. To be called to be a leader in this great reform cause is no common calling. And extraordinary means may not only be justifiable, but absolutely necessary, in order to your due qualification for the right and successful discharge of your duty to the Church. We shall now take the liberty of mentioning one of those means which may be termed extraordinary, namely,—that you private members should meet together for the purpose of discussion on the subject of reform. This should be regarded as essential to your qualification for leadership. Depend upon it, if ever you are soundly to be taught, you must reform yourselves, you must teach yourselves, you must assist to instruct, admonish, and encourage one another. In the ordinary mode, you may meet with teachers who may be well calculated to interest you to a certain extent, but with an enquiring mind there may be many things which you cannot fully understand by mere general instruction, there may be a hundred questions that you might wish to put if you but knew to whom to put them, and you might feel that you could desire to make some observations were you permitted with a fair opening to do so. Now the ordinary channel is not sufficient for you whose province it is to take the lead. No! You must meet together where you can propose any question, and make any and every observation required. For this purpose, you might meet two or three together, to any number that should be found convenient. But all such meetings should be in order, according to arrangement; it might be similar to the following, on a small card, "Methodist Private Members' Reform and Amalgamation Discussion Society, to be held at——— at———o'clock. N.B.—Not transferable to any official member who does not consent and subscribe to *merge* all local and circuit *official authority* and all such *official meetings*, into *church authority* and *church meetings*, in the proper sense of the terms." Thus, such a discussion society should be open and free to any private member of any and of all the Methodist people, without restriction of name or section or sex. The business of this discussion society should be to obtain and communicate information on church polity and its

affairs, but not to pass formal resolutions. Formal resolutions are to be made elsewhere, in the legitimate channel, where no member of the church should be excluded from taking his part, this private members' meeting is to prepare you for your public duties in the church, for your right and able discharge of them. We may again hint, that against this little extraordinary project, you may hear of demurs, and rumours of demurs, from a certain order of reformers—heed it not, be not frightened or intimidated from the purpose, the object being not to divide reformers, but to prepare to assist in carrying out the reform itself. It is to be regarded as a mere private arrangement for the use of the private members. The official members of the church, as at present existing, have their meetings, it is not the place here to say whether right or wrong in themselves, into which the private members are not admissible, except (we shall forbear for the present to say for what purpose) for instance, "The Leaders' Meeting" so called, in which meeting the weekly or every day affairs of every Methodist church, are transacted. And the private members may as easily get admittance into the Conference itself, as into one of those meetings with closed doors. But the proposed *weekly meeting* for the use of the private members, is to transact no church affairs whatever, but only to prepare themselves for their duties elsewhere, when any suitable occasion may be open for them. *Then* their united *resolve* may be, "that the basis of a plan for a reformation of existing abuses in Methodism, shall be the principle of the right of interference, on the part of the members of the church, in the regulation of all its affairs." In the meanwhile, in what is now suggested, the members will have an opportunity of considering together the opinions of others, and of forming their own opinions on the subject at large. Amongst the variety of topics, you will have to consider such like Wesleyan Methodistical law as the following—"Let no man, or number of men, circulate letters, call meetings, do, or attempt to do, anything new, until it has first been appointed by the Conference." Free discussion must be its antidote, as well as the antidote to all the despotism in Methodism, whether stationed or *local*. On all of which you will have to consider, and give in your verdict. Therefore, free discussion cannot be dispensed with—it must be defended.

"The late celebrated Daniel Webster has the following fine passage in defence of free discussion—"Important as I deem

it to discuss, on all proper occasions, the policy of the measures at present pursued, it is still more important to maintain the right of such discussion, in its full and just extent. Sentiments lately sprung up, and now growing fashionable, make it necessary to be explicit on this point. The more I perceive a disposition to check the freedom of enquiry, by extravagant and unconstitutional pretences, the firmer shall be the tone which I shall assert, and the freer the manner in which I shall exercise it. It is the ancient and undoubted prerogative of this people, to canvas public measures and the merits of public men. It is a 'home-bred right,'—a fire-side privilege. It hath ever been enjoyed in every house, cottage, and cabin, in the nation. It is not to be drawn into controversy. It is as undoubted as the right of breathing the air, or walking on the earth. Belonging to private life as a right, it belongs to public life as a duty; and it is the last duty which those, whose representative I am, shall find me to abandon. Aiming at all times to be courteous and temperate in its use, except when the right itself shall be questioned, I shall then carry it to its extent. I shall place myself on the extreme boundary of my right, and bid defiance to any arm that would move me from my ground. This high constitutional privilege I shall defend and exercise, within this house, and without this house, and in all places; in time of war, in time of peace, and at all times. Living I shall assert it, dying I shall assert it; and should I leave no other inheritance to my children, by the blessing of God, I will leave them the inheritance of free principles, and the example of a manly, independent, and constitutional defence of them."

"We most earnestly hope and trust that our Methodist brethren of America will join us in acting, in church polity, on those enlightened sentiments of their worthy countryman—if they have not already preceded us.

"Men and brethren! Meet together, speak with one another, as in the sight of God, whatever is in your heart to speak. If you lack wisdom, ask of God, and he will give it you, but above all, work the works of Him that sent you, while it is day, for the night cometh, when no man can work. We earnestly hope that you will act as becometh men and Christians, on whom now rest a responsibility the most weighty and the most solemn, that has ever rested on the members of any church in modern times. The people, the

leader,—every one *one* in this reformation,—subordinate to none but the head of the church, under Him we are co-workers in his vineyard. And under Him, our captain and leader, we are all officials, we have all our part to fulfil. Therefore, every member should consider it an honour to join the discussion society, and manifest it by regular and punctual attendance, and by bearing an equal proportion of the pecuniary expenses. This discussion society should not be turned into a singing or a prayer meeting—discussion, free discussion, should be considered as its only legitimate business.

"It may not be out of place here, to make one particular remark on the object of our thus meeting together. It is not a narrow one, but rather an expansive object. It is not only that the disgrace of such oppression, as is complained of, should be removed from ourselves, but that the pains and penalties of such like oppression should be removed from all the Methodist people, wherever they do or may exist—hence all are to be admitted to those discussions for the universal benefit. It is here that we commence, where our reforming predecessors did not enter, or stuck fast. It is perceivable that it was to raise the church dignity of their own section, but not to rescue a degraded people from degradation, that their efforts were made, ceasing their efforts before that was accomplished. The question now is, the erection of such a scriptural platform as will invite and hold the entire family of Methodists.

"Therefore we are about to attempt to supply the lack of Official Reformers,—but let us do it in right good humour.—Let this be distinctly understood, that if we are for reform, we cannot be against reformers;—but let this be understood also, that, for the present, we have nothing to do with the Official Reformers. We step not forth to school any one;—but to reform ourselves have we made our appearance, to teach ourselves, and to assist one another in this preparatory work for future activity and usefulness, in the greatest church reform, perhaps, that ever existed,—to unite against the common foe, and not to cherish a frivolous and unreasonable jealousy of each other. Even united, the whole may seem insufficient to contend against such a foe, but, divided amongst ourselves, many may be disposed rather to succumb than to resist. However, we feel compelled to assert certain opinions, however invidious it might seem to many.

"The result of a free discussion in the onset should be, to

satisfy the scruples and meet the wishes of many who had previously stood aloof. The brethren present should constitute themselves into a committee, and subsequently, to consider of some plan, which should be of an educational kind, and chiefly among young men ;—thus you may hope to organise a body of those of superior intelligence and christian character, who would voluntarily charge themselves with the propagation of the Society's principles. In accordance with arrangement, the brethren might meet weekly, monthly, or oftener, for the delivery of addresses, the reading of papers, and free discussion. All this is important in reference to the future,—and we do not wish to have our proceedings marred by an inconsistent and impotent conclusion.

" A struggle is commenced between that which is, and that which is to be, with no other apparent result, as yet, than a neutralization of forces, in which chaos has revived, and confusion become worse confounded. All sorts of reformers in church government have been trying their hand,—but nothing will thrive effectually. There is, apparently, a fatality about this people, that causes everything foreign to Scriptural polity to fail. And to this we say Amen, *i.e.*, so be it, so let it be, and so it shall be. We cannot wish such, God-speed.

" Certain opinions relative to church government, not being disputed by some parties, we may be told that " similar views are held by many besides ourselves. In time they will spread more widely,—we must wait." Wait! Really, for the very Rights and Liberty of us,—we can see no good in waiting, but otherwise ! Therefore, we perceive the necessity of commencing at once, sowing beside all waters, in season and out of season, labouring for and expecting an early and a complete harvest,—perhaps we have waited far too long already, hearing of progress, progress, as if the church and its constitution had been a mere limited human affair, which has yet to be settled. One age by some parties not being considered sufficient to settle a great question,—hence, wait,—and progress.—And seventeen thousand Acts of our Parliament since the writer was a boy at school,—and still we hear with it of progressive reform. Our Nation has progressed, and no doubt but that it will yet progress, but will the philosophers at the head of affairs, after 17,000 Acts of Parliament more, come to the end of the chapter ? But pray what of all that. As church reformers we are called on to exercise a very different, a higher philosophy, we are, at once and direct,

required to contend for first principles,—"That ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,"

"Two things were forgotten by those who advocated a contrary opinion. First, that the church was composed of men, not as citizens, but saints. The materials of the spiritual community being in every place and every age the same, the same constitution which suited it at first, must suit always.—Secondly, that the Gospel was actually preached, and converts made, in countries where the most diversified schemes of civil polity prevailed, yet, in the constitution of the law, as it subsisted in those places, there was no difference,—it was everywhere the same.

"Yes! Be it ours to exhibit what are the principles, and what the practical working of New Testament Christianity, and we can depend on it that God will crown us with his blessing.

"Thus far,—we have ventured on these remarks, because we thought it due to the reader, no less than to ourselves, to explain the plan and outline of a design at present only partially developed.

(The preliminary remarks to be continued.)

Faithfully yours, ELIHU.

"P.S.—The Amalgamation question being premature, we are most anxious that you should reserve your decisive opinion on that question for the present. We intend bringing it before you at large, for discussion, immediately after the appearing of "the declarable rules," which you will have as a *test* to try the merits of the said amalgamation. Let us carefully avoid the errors which we justly condemn in others,—we must say organization before amalgamation. We must amalgamate one with another before making pretensions to amalgamate with other sections,—the which the Official Reformers have not as yet done, even with their own people. But relative to the Wesleyan Association we shall have to produce *facts*, new facts which we confidently calculate will assist in its condemnation and utter rejection by the reformers, notwithstanding its illusory forms of freedom and representative government, being without any effective check upon the power of the officials over the Rights and Liberties of the people themselves, so that the full meaning colloquy may be forced from it. "And I, if I be lifted up, will drive all *men* from me, will disgust all men from me, will horrify all men

from me."—And if we are to be crucified between two thieves, we pray God that the Association may not be suffered to be one of them. It is one thing to establish a system,—it is another thing to consider how we are to deal with a system already established. However, it can do the cause no harm to wait three or four weeks longer. The Reformers, therefore, should not consent to such an off-hand resolution on amalgamation, *Elihu.*"

ADDRESSED TO THE PEOPLE CALLED METHODIST—as written for the "*Wesleyan Times.*"

The preliminary remarks continued.—We would remark that we are not actuated by any frivolous wish to avoid the ground preoccupied by others, and claim in the world of agitation some spot, however humble, whereon we seek to establish ourselves not where the land is the most fertile, but where it is the least enclosed,—though we would dare to be singular if duty required it.

Hence, what may be termed, our daring in the first remarks relative to a "Discussion Society," for the use of the private members, and therefore we are now acting in character in putting the query, Have you considered it your duty to meet together accordingly? We shall have to keep each other up to the line of duty. Have you thus far, well and truly tried the remarks already advanced, according to the evidence given?—if so, well! but if not, then your duty will be to go back and do your work over again, locking yourselves up until you have arrived at some conclusion, you should be prepared to give in your verdict when duty calls you to do it. As the last article was concluded with a pressing to duty, so we have considered it necessary to commence the present.—Let it be for once and for all remarked, that Rights have their corresponding duties. Duty is ours, events the Lord's, hence a jealous eye is as much over us private members, in this controversy, as over any other members of the church, it is the duty that creates the responsibility. But remembering that the path of duty is the path of safety, as he that will do shall be taught,—that we have many things to learn, as there must be many things to make all things, we are anxious that we be all found at the post of duty, taking a step in the right direction in the "Discussion Society," keeping its grand object and end in view, viz., a *defence* for the *glory*.

In the former remarks it is observed,—We are about to commence our opinions exactly where the official reformers

have not entered or come to a stand still. In fact, Elihu's opinion on the constitution of the church had been formed and committed to writing ere a single preliminary remark was penned. But to produce them without some preparatory remarks was regarded as hazardous. Supposing for instance, that such "declarable rules" were for the first time to be considered in a church meeting—of course there would be a strong muster of officials—is it to be calculated that the officers would join the other members in a fair discussion of the subject? Could it be calculated on that the officials would readily consent to any discussion on the subject whatever?—only to set it aside altogether in a wholesale mode, after, to save some appearance, tolerating its reading in a lowering and high and mighty fashion, viz.,—"This is what our people do not want." But then, let there be a single private member who thinks differently, and who may attempt to explain himself accordingly. Then, the officials being roused, produce their resolution, that, "the remarks on those rules being frivolous and vexatious, be no farther proceeded with,"—Moved, seconded, and carried,—shelved! (By-the-bye, it is such like official-craft which has *given birth* to the "Private Members' Discussion Society.") It is to prevent a repetition of such-like official triumph that we have to make some special remarks, knowing that, in order to serve their own ends, they are ever ready to play upon words, or on the people's feelings in their weakest part. Suppose, for instance, that Wesley's name could not, in fairness, be separated from the Wesleyan system of church government, and that in changing the latter we should have to drop the former. Then, in order to prevent two great a change for *official taste*, the name itself would have to be contended for. "What! the venerable Wesley, now laid in his sainted grave, whose memory must be so dear to every Methodist, indeed *his* blessed name to be lost to *us*. We must rather say, that everything connected with such a proposal, should not only be suspected, but rejected altogether." Now, to be forewarned should be to be forearmed. Look at the consistency,—those very officials would assist for hours together, week after week, and year after year, in abusing, in the strongest terms, Wesley's living successors in the Conference. The Conference is not to be vindicated, but, from *whom* did *its* offence come, who was its *originator*? We can take no pleasure in abusing the Conference, we verily believe it is to be pitied. By possibility some one of us might

have been one of its members, and might have been carried away with its influence and example, just as *it* suffered itself to be carried away by John Wesley's example and influence—not of necessity, which creates its fault. And has not the pitying eye of the judge of the quick and the dead been over our erring and fallen Jerusalem? "O! Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not? Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." But relative to Wesley's name, there may be a false delicacy in all this. The cold grave has closed on him, who had been the idol of the people; you have submitted to an evil from whose grasp you can hardly escape, but the frailties which we justly consider crimes in the living, are regarded with compassion, when the grave has for ever closed over those who were guilty of them, your regret may be misplaced—"Weep for yourselves and for your children," for the church and for the world. We would not spare you this humiliation, you have been too long learning the cant of liberty among slaves. Bitterly we should regret the years of labour of love, and work of faith, which had been lavished on one man, ever insensible of their value.

Respecting such a man as John Wesley, who had been the laborious instrument of so much good, such things should not be said without proof—proof broad and clear as the open sunshine, when it pours down brightest from Heaven. Then on this point be the issue between us. If we do not give you proof—clear, glaring, indisputable—then we would acknowledge that there might be some shadow of pretence for hesitation, or at least for deliberation, ere his name be finally dropped in "Methodism as it should be, in accordance with the Divine Scriptures."

Nevertheless, Wesley's character, beautiful and sublime in many respects as it was, had its strong leaven of human imperfections in that very self-dependence which was born of his reason. In resting so solely on man's perceptions of the right, he lost one attribute of the true Christian hero—faith. He did not rely on the Celestial pervading all Scripture, never seen, only felt when duly courted, stronger and lovelier than what eye could behold, and mere reason could embrace.—Believing, it is true, in God, he lost those fine links that unite

God to man's secret heart. Relative to his government of the church, his large mind was lighted from below.

Ye Methodist people, Do you *want* for the pure doctrines of the Gospel, as preached by John Wesley himself, *settled*, and embraced by the people at large, to be neutralised, cast off, thrown aside as useless or evil, or do you *want* a *defence* for them? That is the question! Yet we have been told by some professed official reformers, that, "these are the things the people do not want,"—and that they are frivolous and vexatious,—therefore not admissable for discussion in an assembly of the church. But, without their good leave, we are now discussing them in our private province.—Indeed! "These are things which our people do not want." It is with indignation that we now enter our protest against such a libel on the Methodist people. But of official definition of such a discussion in the church being "frivolous and vexatious,"—relative to that latter term we are not going to bespeak your sympathy for the official affliction, our feelings not going in that direction. But relative to the former, in respect to those doctrines and their defence, of which we have intimated, do *you* regard them as frivolous, as trifling, of no moment or importance? Would you be so far led away and deluded, as to hold up your hand against them? would you join the officials to shelve them? would you be thus found glorying in your shame, like unto certain officials? By the Wesleyan Conference, those glorious doctrines have been neutralized and rejected, in the absence of a constitution to defend them.—And here we are forced to remark, that, notwithstanding the consummate practical rejection of those glorious doctrines by the Wesleyan Conference, yet this dire subject has constituted no part of the official reformer's professed concern, mission, or creed, from the commencement of the agitation to the present time. The root and extent of the corruption escaping their very notice,—let there be no mistake here, how repeatedly has it been declared, that, "It is not on account of doctrine that we are agitating." Hence, out of their own mouth they are to be condemned. We agree with the reform officials that the Wesleyan Conference is doomed. But what an idea on their part, relative to the cause, that, because the doomed in 1849 had been falling out one with another, this was their starting point in their grand stand against the Conference, and thus manifesting their complete ignorance of, or consummate indifference to, the existing root and extent of the

corruption, together with its remedy;—men hedged in by morbid prejudice, and never glancing beyond a certain and narrow range of vision, men, moreover, who have been fostered in the worship of self, and who must be injured in that precious self before they can force themselves into energy.

Now, brethren, we are going to make some few special remarks on this part of the subject. As a people, we do value and love the holy doctrines as preached and written by the Rev. John Wesley. Would to God that we could thus reverence his name and memory relative to his system of church government, but he left the glorious doctrines *defenceless*, and therefore his *memory* is left defenceless. But! relative to the doctrines themselves, are we not ready and prepared to defend them at any price, should it be even with our very lives. As a people, could we consent to the betrayal of those holy and glorious doctrines, or, in preference suffer, if it were possible, a thousand deaths? Yet, those holy and glorious doctrines were deliberately *betrayed* by the Wesleyan Conference, in the year of our Lord 1846, and we hesitate not to affirm, as our decided opinion, that the Wesleyan Conference, from that *period*, and on account of that *fatal act*, was itself doomed—this was our own opinion at the very time. But pray! which of the official reformers believed it at the time, or subsequently acted under the impression and conviction? Were they not all mute? Yea, on this dire subject mutes all. But we cannot be silent when we think on Methodism *as it is*, and *as it should be*. Should not this be the sentiment of every individual of us, relative to the light and glorious side of Methodism. "If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

Not only have systems of churches their dark and light sides, but that of individual members also, not excepting even some of the great and good, and it may not be out of place here to single out, as one of those, the person of John Wesley himself, as being the instrumental founder both of the dark and bright side of Methodism. Hence we affirm, that John Wesley's portrait has a *dark* as well as a *light* side. Looking at that assertion in its fact, and *pernicious* consequences, we are inexpressibly spurred on to get at the root of the evil. Therefore, we would speak as freely of Wesley as of any other person; yea more so, as we would *test* the *first* link in the chain in order to ascertain whether or not it is found

connected with the truth of scripture. Why, then, should we hesitate to show the dark side of even our *favorites?* The truth of the portrait would disarm opposition, and tend to promote the reconciliation of conflicting parties. John Wesley professed to be "a man of one book." In *part* he was consistent, but in an essential part he *never was* consistent, and on the whole he was one of the most inconsistent of men. At one and the same time, throughout the greatest part of his earthly existence, he built on *the foundation* "gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble"—*i. e.*, he preached the pure word of God relative to the all sufficient sacrifice and atonement of Christ Jesus, for the sins of the whole world, as procuring a full, free, and present salvation by faith in that atonement, and thus did the word of God swiftly run, and was glorified in the salvation of multitudes of immortal souls, as an earnest of what God had designed to accomplish by the same means—but, would to God there were no exception here, but alas! there does exist a grievous and a ruinous one. Jesus Christ, the foundation, is not divided, he is our prophet, priest, and king, he is head over all things to the church, but John Wesley, in the government and discipline of the Methodist church, refused to build on that foundation, he would frame a foundation of his own, in the accomplishment of which he usurped the authority of Christ, and perverted the Divine Scriptures,—he made himself the very pope of Methodism, both in principle and practice,—and all this with the "book" in his hand. Ah! who can understand his errors? We may have occasion to draw attention to the light side of Methodism. It is well known that Wesley's name is popular, and deservedly so, relative to the extent and utility of his labours in spreading the truth,—who disputes it?—But then, in spreading and establishing a system of error, calculated to counteract and destroy that very work for which his name became decidedly popular, should and must of sheer necessity cause the name of Wesley in Methodism to become *unpopular*, when that fact is known and understood.

We would draw attention to the purport of an important question and answer by the venerable Wesley,—we do indeed venerate the light side of his portrait. "For what purpose are the Methodist preachers raised up? Answer,—To promote reformation, and to spread Scriptural Holiness through the land." And the following are his own words on another occasion,—"Friday 6th, being the quarterly day for meeting

the local preachers, between twenty and thirty of them met at West Street, and opened their hearts to each other. Taking the opportunity of having them altogether, at the watchnight, I strongly insisted on St. Paul's advice to Timothy, *Keep that safe which is committed to thy trust*, particularly the doctrine of Christian Perfection, which God has peculiarly entrusted to the Methodist." And there is recorded his farther sentiments on those subjects, viz., That he had found that, where the doctrine of Christian perfection was preached as a *present* salvation by faith, there sinners were converted, and the Society was in a lively state,—but that, where that doctrine was not preached as a *present* salvation, there were no conversions, and that the Society was in a dull state.

We now come to facts bearing on those all-important subjects. The Wesleyan Conference of preachers in 1846 opened *their* hearts to each other,—but!—it was for the very purpose of *betraying* that very *trust* now referred to. They, there and then, passed and enforced a law to close all the pulpits and chapels against *special revival services*, and the preaching of *Christian Perfection*, which had been very successfully exercised the three or four preceding years. Thus betraying the *real sacred trust*, and striking at the root of our beloved Methodism, in bringing to a consummation the mystery of iniquity. We hesitate not to assert, as our deliberate and decided opinion, that, that is the cause, the *final* cause of the "doom." Doomed—severe term that! is it not?—Terribly so, if true. But,—the cause! And is there not a cause?—For God *doth not afflict willingly*, nor grieve the children of men,—and judgment is *his strange work*. But yet, the Lord doth do his work, *his strange work*, and bring to pass his act, *his strange act*. Do we not read of God's coming out of his place for such a purpose? Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? Then must there not be a cause? But!—It was not the violation of the much boasted law of 1795-97 that is the cause. It was not the enactment of the much complained-of-law of 1835 that is the cause. Neither was it the execution of that law "question by penalty" in 1849 that is the cause. The final cause, we have presumed, was prior to that period. The act and deed—that rash act—was perpetrated in the hour and power of darkness, and was ratified at the Wesleyan Conference in the year of our Lord 1846, *producing the cause* of which we now speak. It was there and then that our holy religion received its fatal stab, by the

combination of a set of traitors ;—no mistake here—that act and deed, mad as it was, was not one of mere haste, overtaken by surprise,—it was a premeditated act, regularly and repeatedly brought forward in deliberative council, when judgment was passed and sentence executed. It had been attempted in '45,—but brought to a consummation in '46.

The seeds of that wide-spread tree of evil were sown by John Wesley himself. Early in Methodism he commenced sowing the seeds of despotism, and he spent a long life in a continual watering of that dire seed. By his daily, widely, and long-extended example and authority, he trained up the whole of his assistants in the ministry to works of despotism, who,—in accordance with his own arrangement and provision —at his decease, stepped into his shoes ;—and, the natural result, the evil progressed,—and whatever progress it has made since Wesley's time, he should stand in for his fair share of the credit. The Wesleyan Conference acknowledges to a man of it, that it had received the "deposit" of despotism from John Wesley. And it has made rapid strides in the work, carrying it out with a vengeance, both for itself and the church, yea, such has been its prodigious progress, that, "the wood, hay, and stubble" have buried or consumed the "gold, the silver, and the precious stones," so that there is nothing left but famine, desolation, death, and complete destruction. And there can be no mistake here whatever : Wesley's successors write it plainly. "No meetings for the conversion of sinners allowed here,—No preaching of Christian perfection allowed here,—No parading of *the one book* allowed here."— Now all this, and a great deal more, must in a certain sense, be put to the *dark* side of Wesley's portrait, that is the legitimate place for it, however dark it may become.

John Wesley was one of the most inconsistent of men.— What a strange condition is that of a man who employs his study, his reading, his meditation, his labours, his public and private discourses, to subvert the foundation of that edifice which Jesus Christ came to erect among mankind, and which he hath cemented with his blood ! What a doctrine is that of a man who presumes to call himself a guide of conscience, a pastor of flocks, an interpreter of Scripture, and who gives false directions, and darkens and tortures the word of God ! in the government of His Church.

Jesus Christ, to confound the glosses of the false teachers of his time, said, *Ye have heard* that it *was said by them of*

old time so and so, *but I say unto you* otherwise. The teachers, of whom we speak, use another language, and they say, you have heard that it was said by Jesus Christ, so and so, but we say to you otherwise. You have heard that it hath been said by Jesus Christ, *one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren,* that *the rulers of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them,* but *it shall not be so among you,* but I say unto you, that all the power is given to me, and I will exercise it, and never give it up, J. W. You have heard that it hath been said by Jesus Christ, that *if thy brother shall trespass* against thee, *tell it unto the Church,* but I say unto you, tell it unto the elder, or elders, for what good purpose will it answer to tell the faults of an individual to the whole church (?)—John Wesley. You have heard that it hath been said by Jesus Christ, *My kingdom is not of this world,*—But I say unto you, that we will not separate from the church, the State Church.—John Wesley. You have heard that it hath been said by Jesus Christ *search the Scriptures,*—But I say unto you, "I desire to do all things openly and above board, I would have all the world, and especially all our Societies, see, not only all the steps we take, but the *reason* why we take them."—John Wesley.

But we say, no rules of reasoning require us to answer people, who contradict themselves in so glaring a manner. If this disposition be deplorable, considered in itself, it becomes much more so by attending to the motives that produce it. Sometimes it is ignorance, which makes people sincerely crawl in the thickest darkness, amidst the finest opportunities of obtaining light; sometimes it is obstinacy, which impels people to maintain, for ever to maintain, what they have once affirmed. Sometimes it is pride, that will not acknowledge a mistake. Always, it is negligence of the great salvation, which deserves all our pains, vigilance the most exact, and sacrifices the most difficult. Now, if those motives cannot be fastened on John Wesley's character, then it must be looked for elsewhere. Hence, we are forced to the conclusion, that it must be that, of some kind or other, of *insanity.* Might be, proceeding from Satanic influence, it being clearly perceptible that *an enemy hath done this.* By the bye, some folk, now a day, would affect to think it rather unfashionable to speak of the devil and his influence. But, finding his names and his works, to some considerable extent, contained in the scriptures, we hesitate not to speak out on the subject.

There he is found to be a deceiver, a sinner from the beginning. A most wicked angel, the implacable enemy and tempter of the human race, especially believers, whom he desires to devour. Those are names given to the prince of the Devils, who perhaps was the first in that grand rebellion against God, whereby they all fell into a rooted enmity against holiness, and into endless horror, blackness and despair—see Jude VI, and the injunction, "put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil." Hence, the insanity mentioned, must be a voluntary one, notwithstanding its being Satanical. We should rather marvel if Satan had not something to do with John Wesley's system of church government, he had something to do with the acts of the Apostles, he entered into one of them for the purpose of betraying Jesus Christ, he desired to have another of them, that he might sift him as wheat—yea, Christ himself was *tempted of the devil.* And wherever the great work of human salvation is designed to be accomplished, there the devil will be found for *counteraction.*

Therefore, we can conceive, that, at the commencement of Methodism, the prince of the devils held a special consultation as to the effectual scheme to hinder it in its mighty effect, and that there must have been a mighty conflict between the powers of light and the powers of darkness. Some of the consultations of those spiritual wickednesses in high or low places, who go to and fro in the earth, may be imagined thus, "The doctrines, as preached by this people, must sure to be the destruction, yea, the speedy destruction of our kingdom on the earth,—What think ye, how can this work be hindered, be overturned? We must have recourse to the old successful plan of getting *access* to the *officials.*—In the meanwhile, let the people be harassed by our allies, the *State Church*, and its adherents, though by scattering of them, they may do our cause the more injury. But we must not lose sight of the main chance, our stronghold, that of getting access to the officials, especially the most *influential leader* of them. But then, recollecting that he professes to be "a man of one book," we must be excessively cautious that suspicion be not aroused. Under existing circumstances, we can conceive of one or two effectual schemes, that is,—To persuade that no formal government need be adhered to in order to protect the doctrines, or, that the whole government should be in the

hands of one or more officials, as in their wisdom they may see fit,—the which, we calculate, will be the same as if there had been no government at all to defend the doctrine,—yea, we do think that the latter would be preferable, if we can influence to manage it, so that the officials shall have the supremacy. However, we may have a try on the both of those schemes, in order to secure our purpose. For instance, there is that J. W. with *the book* in his hand,—and with such a weapon he must be diverted if possible, from attending seriously to any separate, special, or formal government for his followers,—but to prevent this, his attention should be taken off, in order that he may have at hand some plausible excuse, pretence, or partial substitute. Ah,—here it is,—He and his followers must not *separate* from the church, *i.e.*, the *State Church*. On these chief points we must use all, *even* our constant influence. If we prevail here we shall be sure to succeed in our object, the hinderance, or *rather* the overturning of the doctrine altogether, so far as any *practical* result may be concerned. We must say, moreover, that J.W. should, by all means, be persuaded that he is the only proper authority to govern while he lives,—and that he should make over his power to his successors *in office* in *trust* after his decease. That is,—For us for ever."

But fancy apart, we have to do with facts, with stubborn facts,—though we may have, once and away, opposed imagination to subjects which deserve not the exercise of common sense to refute them. We have asserted, relative to Methodism, that there has ever been a mighty conflict between the powers of light and the powers of darkness, the latter having prevailed to a fearful extent, hence the *insanity* of John Wesley on *two ruinous* points in his government in Methodism, that all the *power* was given to him over the people, and that the Methodist should not separate from the State Church. And be it remembered that it was a voluntary insanity with which he was possessed, and consequently held responsible. And did he ever come to his *right mind* in these respects (?) He ruled over the Methodist churches most despotically while he lived.—And relative to that State Church of his, from which *he* would allow of no separation; that state church had thrust him out of its connexion, for the alleged Methodistical crime of praying, visiting the sick, studying the Scriptures, and preaching salvation by faith to perishing sinners, and for which

it became the inveterate enemy of the Methodist people,—This being that "apostolic church" of John Wesley's, from which he would not separate,—but! for him to pretend not to allow the Methodist people to separate, would you not conclude that he must have been *doubly* mad, and let John Wesley speak for himself, whether or not he ever came to his right mind in this respect; were his last thoughts and prayers for the devoted people of his charge, who had, indeed, been most passionately devoted to him throughout his long career of labours and usefulness in conjunction with themselves, in honour and dishonour, in good report and evil report, in life and death? Or, were his last thoughts and prayers for that state church of his? Witness his last sentiments—"The Lord grant us peace and truth, and I pray God to bless the church and the King."—J. W. Thus his spirit passed away, and there we must leave him for the present, with his sun setting under a Methodistical cloud.

But, John Wesley's works, whether good or bad, must follow. One of his handiworks was, the making over to one hundred of his assistants, preachers, the whole of his despotic power over the people, so far as his own example went, and their property in the chapels and premises, so far as the law of the land would admit—hence, by John Wesley's act and deed, the people hath been rendered powerless, without liberty in the church to defend themselves, their property, and especially the doctrines and institutions of Methodism as it should be. There was no *defence* for the *glory*, hence the result which we have already indicated.

It is about nine or ten years since that the subject now referred to, had been brought forward at two successive Conferences, there formally discussed. Mark, *independent* of any other *member* of the church, and the result, in that council assembled, did the resolve take place, which was there and then executed, the Devil, it would appear, having the complete mastery. But! there being a day of *reckoning*, where no extenuation can be admitted, or at all hoped for under the then existing circumstances of the case, that act of the Wesleyan Conference must be regarded as a *voluntary insanity*, which is briefly as follows:—About that period a Methodist Preacher of the gospel came from America to these lands, preaching a full and present salvation by faith in the atonement of Christ, and *proving* that his professed mission was

of God, by the many thousands of persons who were converted under his ministry! Mark, he always consulting the preachers here and first getting their consent to the use of the chapels and pulpits, also his labours were free of expense, and he interfering not with church government affairs, being strictly Methodistical, against himself or his labours there was no cause of complaint. But!—he was making havoc on the devil's territory. Within six years, by his instrumentality, about twenty-six thousand precious souls were blessed of God, including a great number of the Wesleyan *Members*, who had been living without the *root of the matter*, or doubtful characters at least. Then, it would appear, came on afresh, a mighty conflict between the powers of light and the powers of darkness. The methodist people themselves joyfully received the American minister as a *special messenger* from God, and heartily worked with him for the salvation of immortal souls—*i. e.* so far as they were permitted by Methodism *as it is*, for they had to obtain the consent of the preachers to use their own chapels, and when asking such liberty, mark the answer, as a *specimen*, from one of their superintendents, (now gone to his account) "If I were to consult you I should say *yes*, but if I were to consult myself I would say *no*." Then came on the deciding question. With whom would the preachers of the Wesleyan Conference league—with the powers of light, or with the powers of darkness—would the preachers themselves take warning, would they take that man of God as a messenger sent to reproach their own conduct? For, from the period of Wesley's death, their conduct had ever been reproachable in exercising lordship over the people, but especially for a great number of years past, in the neglect, the general and habitual neglect of that pure doctrine as preached by John Wesley, having thus without doubt been grieving the holy Spirit of God, causing a withdrawal of former manifested power to save. Oh! how much may have depended on their reception or rejection of that message designed by the great Head of the Church. In the meanwhile, there was a mighty conflict going on between the opposite powers of light and darkness—some of the preachers at first received the messenger as a brother minister, worked with him, acknowledging him a holy man of God, but, could they stand that home-thrust reproach—granted that he is right, therefore we cannot be

right as a body, but what is to be done? In their great strait what powers did they apply to? They would not come to the light, lest their deeds should be reproved. But no question but that the powers of darkness were at hand ready with their assistance and council—hence "something should be done for you—can you submit, must you submit, should you submit?" Reply, "Alas! but what excuse can we make—it is well known that we profess to be great sticklers for Wesley's doctrines—and it is the preaching of those doctrines, and in the very manner as recommended by John Wesley himself, that censures us, and we can find no other fault in him." "Why then you must make a virtue of necessity—say anything or nothing by way of excuse; is it not enough for such personages as yourselves to say so and so, are you bound to give an account of any of your matters, therefore our counsel is, that you at once use your own authority and irresponsible power." Mark—in accordance with which, "it is now resolved, that James Caughey be now and henceforth shut out from the use of the Wesleyan Chapels, and furthermore, that the American Methodist Conference be written to, to request that he, the said James Caughey, be called away from these lands forthwith."—Moved, seconded, and carried by the Wesleyan Conference in the year 1846.

Therefore, we now place that dark act and deed, then and there committed, to the *dark side* of John Wesley's *portrait*, he having laid on the foundation, wood, hay, stubble, which were then developed in an act of *treachery* to Jesus Christ and his holy religion—the which will not abide the test at the last great trial. We are not to judge before the time, but yet, to think and speak after the manner of men, we can conceive of another council *elsewhere* besides that of the Wesleyan Conference, and also of a *decision* on its decision. Coming events cast their shadows before—we can conceive of the *terrible* but *just doom* of *Wesleyan* Methodism and its Conference from *that hour*, the doom of the traitor whose days are numbered, of which we have some confirmation already in the separation and loss of more than one hundred thousand of its members. The cloud is still gathering darkness, yea we can perceive no light or bright side at all to *Wesleyan Methodism*. For when the *pure doctrines* are *shut out*, alas! what have we left!! And look at the wreck we

must—We regarded J. W. as a good man, but it would appear that the Devil had got into him, into one side of him at least, his *system* in Methodism forces us to that conclusion. We used to regard the Wesleyan Conference preachers as good men, or that they had been good men, but it would appear but too plainly that the Devil has got into them also, yea, from their conduct in the Methodist Church, into every side of them, they acting on a system of church-government, which has turned out to be no more *defence* to the *pure doctrines* than wood, hay, and stubble, as consumed by the fire of the enemy, or by the hand of retributive justice.

While considering of this deplorable state of affairs in Methodism, we have felt the all touching question of the blessed Redeemer, "Will ye also go away." That appeal is now made to the people themselves, not to the overseers in the church. The officials in power and influence had been appealed to repeatedly, but alas! to what purpose. Some few holy men had arisen from time to time to spread the *pure doctrines* in Methodism, God not leaving himself without witness. But the corruptions prevailing by which the Spirit of God was grieved, the *glory* was left without *defence*. For more than a quarter of a century we have been personal witness that there has been a mighty famine of the pure scriptural Methodistical doctrine in the Methodist ministry. The trumpet giving an uncertain sound relative to the attainment of holiness, *when* or *how*, anything but to be obtained by faith as a *present* salvation. Alas! we have been a long night under clouds and darkness, so that from our very pulpits and sanctuaries our holy religion had been almost smothered to death long ere that fatal stab by the Wesleyan Conference of 1846, when the pulpits and chapels were closed against that *man of God*, James Caughey, while God was testifying of his labours by saving hundreds and thousands of precious immortal souls.

If the Wesleyan system is such an enemy to truth as to teach us a doctrine contrary to that which the Holy Spirit hath laid down in Scripture? Then we should remember the saying of the apostle, and, animated with holy indignation, should exclaim, *Though you, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto us than that which we have received, let him be accursed!* Here we take our stand as a *defence for all the glory*. Do the builders always keep in sight

while they are working in the building of the church, *the pattern showed to us in the mount*,—we ought to be attentive, diligent and teachable. Do they make an odious mixture of truth and error, *Christ and Belial, light and darkness*; we ought to *exercise ourselves to discern good* from *evil*. It is this inseparable connexion of our duty with theirs, which determined us to examine and decide for ourselves.

What is all time,—past, present, or to come,—it is experience, action, and hope concentrated in one focus. A man who does not act now forfeits the benefits of the past, and defeats his hopes of the future,—therefore our motto should be *action*. In a discussion of importance there is much that is preliminary.—No superstructure should be attempted, till the basis be rendered broad and firm. Had John Wesley taken the Scriptures for his rule of faith in the government of the church, as he did for the doctrines, he would have been safe and consistent with his profession, but in this respect he ever contradicted himself, and having no firm foundation he pulled down with one hand what he had built up with the other. We are now learning from his fatal blunders,—hence our present work is to strike out the *original prop* of "Methodism as it is," in order that the whole fabric may be effectually undermined, to be as a mass of rubbish to be removed. And here is work indeed for *action*.

The government of the church is not so trivial a matter as some parties would affect,—whether we regard it in its great governor or the governed,—"O Lord, thou art great in counsel, and mighty in work." We wish, when we speak of the church, that we might not be always obliged to speak superficially, under the pretence that we always speak to plain people. We wish we had sometimes the laudable ambition, especially when we are called to act in this sacred cause, of elevating our minds to this sublime subject, of the meditations of which, the occupations, to which our frailties, or, shall we rather say, our corrupt tastes enslave us, we are deprived in the ordinary course of our lives. Suffer the word of exhortation—"Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men." Religion was not designed to destroy any of our natural faculties, but to exalt and improve them, and reason in particular. We are anxious for you to cherish the sublime expression by *Elihu* in Job.—"There is a spirit in man, and

the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding." To this we are also anxious should be connected the sentiment of Paul, "That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."

From the commencement of Methodism itself, and from the commencement of reform in Methodism, the officials discovering that an independent body of people would not rest content without rules for their right and safe government, commenced manufacturing a code for the government of the church. But you should be prepared to view them on all sides, and in all their bearings.

This is the age of criticism—and reform officials know it themselves, they practice it pretty freely on the Conference officials, and among one another of similar profession, they are adepts in the art. And we readily acknowledge, that they have taught some lessons in this science worth our practical attention. We give our criticism—under the conviction that the private members have no more real ground to put implicit confidence in the professed reform officials than they themselves have, not only in Conference officials, but in even those of the different sections of professed reformers, and who may be all good critics themselves in their way, and you may rely on it that we shall never be good and successful reformers unless we become fair critics.

We are now treating of the system of Methodism in its government as left us by its instrumental founder, and its subsequent patchings and mendings under the name of reform. In this age of criticism, when old things are coming to life again, and the quick and the dead are standing together before the tribunal of the Methodist public opinion, it is expected that the Wesleyan, and the Reform theories of church polity, should be put upon their trial. It is not an unprecedented action. It has been practised more or less in all ages of the world, but particularly in these latter days. This, then, is the age of criticism, and criticism means—judgment. This, then, should be the age of judgment! No wonder the people are beginning to think;—it is high time, they have been apparently called on as jurymen long enough. And it is but right that the leaders should shew them an example, or save them the trouble by thinking for them. But then the

leaders themselves must be subject to criticism. Everything tells the same tale. Why distinguish between one fact and another? Why! just because the thinking public will not take the entire,—they draw a line of distinction between one action and another, between one word and another, between one idea and another, and they say, we will accept this, but not that. In fact, it is the judging between the right and wrong of actions, that distinguishes man from the brute, and it is the high and sacred duty of man, in this two-fold world of mixed good and evil, to separate the evil from the good,—the grain from the chaff,—and to appropriate the one to himself, whilst he burns the other with fire unquenchable,—not excepting Wesley's, or even professed Reformers', assumed and unscriptural authority in and over the church. Common sense may teach a man that whenever a line of policy is diametrically opposed to the religion of the people, either the policy or the religion must give way. But we should ever regard it as a province of the church to secure a *polity* that shall not hurt or destroy its *holy religion*, but that it be a *defence* for it. We should not rest without a *defence* for the *glory*;—and we should tremble for our own responsibility.—It will remain for you, the people, to decide which shall give way,—the opposing policy or the religion. The day is past in which the people are to be swallowed up by officials of any or every order.

We should not refuse to hearken to reasons, the strongest that can be devised, although they oppose our own settled judgment. Upon an occasion like this it would ill become any one member of a great body of people, to shut out the slenderest ray of light that from any quarter might be directed upon the questions which so deeply interest and agitate us. Let us freely open our minds to each other, and let no one fear to offend, but by withholding his full and free opinion.

It has been asserted, in reference to political opinions, and the remark equally applies to those by which our Connexion is now agitated, "that the man who cannot form an opinion is a fool, that the man who will not form an opinion is a villain, but a man who dares not form an opinion is a coward and a slave." Whatever others may do, some of whom we have in our view, we can, will, and dare form, yea, and give expression to opinions. Indeed, we are more deeply convinced every succeeding day, that this is the time for every man to

speak out, and to *act out* his principles, we will therefore state frankly and fully what is in our heart respecting Methodism, as it has been formed and administered from its commencement to the present period, that, of all other 'isms, it presents the *most repulsive* aspect. We therefore, as a Christian, and as a Methodist, rightly understood, bear our testimony against all such dire and melancholy misrule, and we further pledge ourselves to stand or fall *in the defence* of the truth.

Our present, as well as past, administrative system is rotten to the core, resulting in the state of things in which we are at present. The character of our Methodism is at stake, constitutional government is now on its trial. The eyes of Methodism everywhere are now upon us reformers at this present crisis, and great will be the triumph of Methodistical despotism, if, in the issue, scriptural constitutional government should fail, and Methodist Reform become the laughing-stock of the thoughtless multitude. Therefore, you should meet together preparatory to the exercise of that important duty, the settlement of reform. We ought to have an independent will of our own, and throwing off the shackles of party, declare for large and abstract principles, contending for the good of the people at large. We say, then, to this great living community of Reformers, Arise! Arise in the dignity of your strength, and in the full power of your christian manhood.—Arise! gird up your loins for the coming struggle, and come to the rescue with something more *definite* than—"moderate progress" for the mighty thousands of the ruined people called Methodist.

There is something of greater importance than even the liberty of the people,—the *law* by which the *liberty* is to be *governed*. As Reformers, we all contend for Liberty and Right, although some of us may appear timid respecting Law. But it should be clearly understood that the church collectively is not legitimately at liberty to do what it likes, or omit whatever it pleases, any more than any individual. Liberty must be tested by the right to exercise it,—that right should be contended for. But this should be most distinctly recognized, that mere members of the christian church cannot have a right to decide any way which they may please, they may have liberty to do it, but they can have no right to act contrary to the law, whatever the power may be from mere numbers or other notions. Right must be determined, not by

membership, but by law,—thus the question may justly be put to any one and every one,—By what authority dost thou these things? Therefore, as a people, if we are ever to be governed aright, it must be by righteous laws. In vain do we worship the great Governor, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men. It must be the word of God that decides the right for the members of the church. With this test it may be lawful and right for any minority to protest against any majority, acting contrary to law in church matters. Thus liberty itself may be impugned, as having no lawful right to act. Liberty without law is a contradiction—a nonentity.—And yet the church is not at liberty to make law, having no right, it is not the province of its members. The liberty of the Gospel can be maintained but by the law of the Gospel—hence the secret of church government of Methodist Reform. Without duly entertaining that sacred law, we may beat about the bush everlastingly, to worse than no purpose.—Liberty is to be destroyed or maintained by law, by law which signifies a rule directing and obliging a rational creature in moral and religious actions. All this may appear very fine in some parties' creed, but how do they honour it in practice, where is their respect for it when tried? We should be anxious that a due respect for the law of the Gospel, in the government of the church, should be cultivated to the utmost, and duly practised.

Every man naturally loves to be at full liberty himself, and, were he to follow his own inclination, would vote himself out of the reach of all laws, divine and human. Yet, no man would willingly adventure to live in a lawless society, and therefore even pirates and robbers have laws among themselves. Thus men show they are conscious of the corruption of nature, not daring to trust one another, but upon security. And seldom there is a time, wherein there are not some persons so great and daring, that the laws dare not to look them in the face. But yet, when the arm of the law is brought to bear on the most daring offender, he finds it too strong for him. Should you receive injustice from any one quarter, you should directly appeal to the law. A righteous law may be like unto its author, where the righteous run in and are safe.

We would direct attention even to a Mussulman's high respect and due submission to his law. We now give it you for the justice and force of its ideas, in accordance with its history.

Mohammed II, being a very passionate monarch, severely rebuked his architect for not having built his mosque of the same height as "St. Sophia's." The architect excused himself by saying, that he had reduced the two columns, in order to give his building more security. The Sultan, not satisfied with this excuse, ordered the architect's hands to be cut off, which was done accordingly. On the following day the architect appeared with his family before the tribunal of the civil and ecclesiastical judge, to lay his complaint against the Sultan, and to appeal to the sentence of the law. The judge immediately sent his officer to cite the Sultan to appear in court. The Imperial Conqueror, on hearing this summons, said, "The command of the Prophet's Law must be obeyed"! and putting on his mantle, and thrusting a mace into his belt, went into the court of law. After having given the customary greeting, he was about to seat himself in the highest place, when the judge said, "Sit not down, O prince! but stand on thy feet, together with thine adversary, who has made an appeal to the law." The architect then made his complaint, "My Lord, I am a perfect Master-Builder, and a skilful Mathematician, but this man, because I made his mosque low, and cut down two of his columns, has mutilated me of both hands, which has ruined me, and deprived me of the means of supporting my family, it is thy part to pronounce the sentence of the noble law." The judge upon this addressed the Sultan, "What sayest thou, prince, hast thou caused this man's hands to be cut off innocently?" The Sultan immediately replied, "By heaven, my lord, this man lowered my mosque, and for having diminished two columns of mine, each worth the produce of Egypt, thus robbing my mosque of all renown, by making it so low, I did so cut off his hands, it is for thee to pronounce the sentence of the noble law." The judge answered, "Prince, renown is a misfortune. If a mosque be upon a plain, and low and open, worship in it is not thereby prevented. If each column had been a precious stone, its value would have been only that of a stone, but the hands of this poor man, which have enabled him for these forty years to subsist by his skilful workmanship, you have illegally cut off. He can henceforth do no more than attend to his domestic affairs. The maintenance of him and his numerous family necessarily, by law, falls upon thee,—what sayest thou, prince? Sultan Moham-

med answered, "Thou must pronounce the sentence of the law"! "This is the legal sentence," replied the judge, "if the architect requires the law to be strictly enforced, your hands must be cut off, for if a man do an illegal act, which the noble law doth not allow, that law decrees that he be requited according to his deeds." The Sultan then offered, from the public treasury of the Mussulmans, to grant the architect a pension. "No," replied the doctor of laws, "it is not lawful to take this from the public treasury, the offence was yours, my sentence therefore is, that from your own private purse you allow this maimed man ten aspers a-day." "Let it be twenty aspers a-day," said the Sultan, "but let the cutting off his hands be legalized." The architect in the contentment of his heart, exclaimed, "Be it accounted lawful in this world and the next," and having received a patent for his pension withdrew. Sultan Mohammed also received a certificate of his entire acquittal. The Cadi then apologized for having treated him as an ordinary suitor, pleading the rigid impartiality of the law, which requires justice to be administered to all without distinction, and entreated the Sultan to seat himself on the sacred carpet. "Effendi," said the Sultan, somewhat irritated, and drawing out the mace from the skirt of his robe, "if thou hadst shown favor to me, saying to thyself, *This is the Sultan*, and hadst wronged the architect, I would have broken thee to pieces with this mace."

We leave these ideas with you for your reflection and application. The *law* must be *respected*. Our relation to God, as his worshippers and subjects, is the ground of our confidence and protection. If God be our ruler, he will be our defender,—and who is he then that can harm us?—Granted, law is necessary, to prevent anarchy among the people, as well as despotism in the officials.

Of course the people are called on to pay, but they will tire of paying every day and receiving nothing any day, they may be disposed to consider obstinacy as a luxury by no means profitable. The people may have concealed as well as open enemies, the concealed is the dangerous foe,—hence the necessity of settling the question at once, it can be done better now than hereafter, it is our business not to fritter away our case by idle pretensions to utility, what we have to do is not to defend the principle, but to act upon the law, our right to equal rights, is as perfect as the right of any man or any class

or order of men whatever, and we will not resign one fraction of it. Our official opponents will find themselves alone in their great wrong. And the people will have imprisoned them at last, and never will release them on conditions more favourable than those now offered. And, as to any offer of mediation, it is regarded by us as something like a proposal to mediate between the burglar and the householder. The genius of one man could supply the place of forty such battalions. The people are not fools, at all events they can profit by example. They saw their would-be masters, by union and combination, get the restrictions taken off the local courts to a certain extent, and certain obnoxious laws repealed —and they naturally inferred, that if union could do so much for the local officials, it could do something for themselves, and so it has, and so it shall. Were it not for union, our chains would become stronger than they are, and were it not for agitation, we should still become more debased, by having those chains riveted on us. But justice! we are preparing, *not* to ask it, not *even* to demand it, but to take possession of it, to exercise it, and to *maintain* it,—that is all! It is the pure freedom of law, as a principle, that is the best protection of the people, and that freedom of law can only be realised where men themselves are free, and where every grievance can be exposed with a full and a bold expression. Religion does not unman us. Be just to the brother, or beware of the man, the christian man,—all the laws of mere officials are but shadows against the stern will of a man whom nature and grace have made strong, and treason has made desperate—being more than the foreshadowing of disappointment—the broad mention of discontent is written, a foreboding of evil, a dread of impending bereavement of our very birth-right.—When two such spirits move on harmoniously, it is heaven, for the great elements of character are alike in each, but when they clash,—alas! when they clash! with unmeasured firmness,—ha!—which will acknowledge to the other,—"I would say that my pride, my stubbornness has wronged you." In proportion, however, as our concern is deep, our caution should be extreme. Our business is to rely solely upon ourselves,—and accept assistance as welcome, not essential.—Education is a good thing, bnt political capacity is a quality in a church not dependent upon education, and the sooner to face that rude fact the better. True, when masses advance,

some one must go first. At present we will not go more into the subject than this. We have faith in the people, we believe the greatest extension of their liberty may be made with increased security to our institutions. We will not flatter the people, we will not say they are not liable to make mistakes with their liberty. But then, we do think the wider the liberty is, if mistakes are made, as the effects of those mistakes in management are soonest felt by the great masses of the people, and not by exclusive official classes, the error is the more likely to be corrected when the power to correct it is in the hands of those classes soonest liable to suffer from the blunder. Argument has done all that argument could do. It wanted organisation to complete it. We want the principles of Church government to be understood, and for them to be *carried out*. That is all we want.

This may be termed the "last experiment"—an appeal to the private members, the fastness. Plans are only useful in the hands of power. What can weakness do with a plan. The power of unity and resolution of purpose, should more than compensate for the want of those showy qualities, which usually command popular admiration. The lovers of freedom will hail it as the first real effort of the people in the agitation, in the war for reform. The people are now called on to engage deeply and earnestly for their own rights. Ours is a triumph to achieve, or a defeat *not* to submit to. As yet, all is only a *palpable obscure*. Reformation in name, or in its very infancy at the most, notwithstanding the high sounding profession we may hear of it with its officials in their climax on the subject.

Are we ready to discharge our duty? Are we prepared to sink minor differences, so that one man shall not say, "Oh, he goes too far," or another, "He does not go far enough." Surely, in a christian community like this, where, to a great extent, we have the power to tell a man, if he does not go far enough, that we wish him to go further, and if he goes too far, "you exceed the bounds of prudence."—What have we to be afraid of? Have we not a common interest? And is there anything more to the advantage of one class of members over another, in that for which we now contend? Be reminded we are of those who think that not only the conference department, but that all the departments of government require reformation, and that forthwith. We only ask

you to look upon the present agitation as one that is in reality a struggle for your existence in a political, in a religious, and a moral point of view. Regard it in that light. Think not only of yourselves but of those around you, far and wide. Recollect that you have a right to speak, that you have a duty to perform, and you cannot conscientiously say you have done as you ought until you have looked at everything which presses on this matter with the most scrutinizing eye, have determined on the course of conduct you will pursue, and have asserted your right to speak out boldly and freely. What you may say that is good, will be appreciated, what you may err in or mistake, will fall to the ground. Therefore, do not let us, on such occasions, when so many important interests are at stake, fall into such errors that must stamp us with disgrace and degradation for ever. The recent dissensions amongst the reformers themselves on various subjects may have diverted the minds of the people from the government question, and served to unite them in official affinities. They are unwilling to agitate, not that many of them do not believe a constitutional church government is not essential, but they fear the disasters of internal agitation at a time when union seems to be particularly desirable. But the history of professed reformers is not yet written out. The time is come when rights are claimed, and the "reform," which the Methodist Churchs have set up, be rejected, as the most salutary check to the ever-growing despotism in official church development.

We are no longer blind instruments in the hands of others. But we must be bent on the improvement of mind and enlargement of the understanding, all will be needful to cope with our opponents. It will be found there is as much of human nature in local officials, as in stationed officials. It is a curious compound, human nature, and the manner in which we advance and recede at the same time, repressing evil in one form, and reviving it in another, is a curious illustration of the difficulties of our position, and the strength of those evil passions which are ever prompting us to the commission of error. During the long continuance of agitation, time rolls on, and the power which, during an unsettled and stormy period, they may be allowed to assume, will become sweet. They will then begin to look upon it as a right, and be extremely loath to part with it, that the liberal principles of

our reform might be fully brought into operation. Therefore our attempt now is to arouse the members to a consciousness of the fact that in rushing from *Scylla* they are fallen upon *Charybdis*, that for the tyranny of a superintendent, which is principally felt by the officers, they shall have exchanged the domineering power of a knot of officials, knit together by the bonds of self-interest and exclusive feelings.

We regard the history of Methodism as one of our best aids in forming a right estimate of the despotic character, at a time when the relations between officials and non-officials are undergoing a revolution. If the picture should appear more favourable than some of our readers anticipated, let them remember that nothing but a large admixture of truth can give permanence to delusion. The Wesleyan Conference declares that its efforts to govern the Methodist people are in perfect accordance with the policy of its founder. But the Wesleyan spirit of fiction and wild imaginings had corrupted, to a certain extent, the simplicity of evangelical truth. The Wesleyan heresy, or rather heresies, had mixed up with Christianity human philosophic speculations, the visionary theories of the despotic school, and the still more daring guesses of tyranny. Was there ever so much useful truth, and so much mischievous error, mixed up in the character of one person as that of John Wesley. It would appear that his object was to form an ecclesiastical religion, a spurious imitation of christianity, in which the doctrines of truth should be mingled with the dreams of human wisdom or human folly. And his tenets were propagated as extensively as Methodism itself. The essential truths of christianity were so limited by the perverted applications of human ingenuity that, had the Apostles returned to life, they could scarcely have recognised their own doctrines in their altered forms.

We must regard the proceedings of the official reformers, at least, as work of mystification, we cannot correctly view them even as pioneers in the cause of reform,—Prepare the way of the Lord, to make his paths straight, to clear the ways, and to *remove* all *impediments*. Far from this, we have to fear a deeper entanglement in the mystery and desert of official Methodism. Is the church set for a defence of the gospel, to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth? Then its first duty is to be jealous over itself as a whole, and in all its details, bring each and all to the test of that gospel which it becomes its duty to defend without partiality. Of

course the great war-note of destroying "Methodism as it is" has been kept up for the last seven years, and we say that it should be kept up, not only for seven years, but seventy times seven, if not brought to its doomed end before that period. But what we are to have in its stead has *not* been the *serious* question with the officials. Anything but that—anything but the thing itself. Policy of the future, class-meetings, moderation, arbitration, and now forsooth amalgamation. Anything to put off the official evil day, namely, "Declarable Rules." Yes, be it repeated, despots can have their own way best in the absence of law. But when such an official evil can be deferred no longer, then the united skill and effort of officials will be engaged to have rules to their own *taste*, of their own manufacturing. All such reform requires reformation, as there will be found in it loop-holes, escape holes in the form of ors, and buts, and ands, and ifs, and sundry undeterminables. In reality, making the official the factotum in the government of the church. In all this the officials may be cunning, but cunning is potent only in small affairs, and always ultimately fails.

Dangers, it is obvious, lie in our path, and they are to be encountered boldly, promptly, fearlessly. While Methodism, as it should be, is self-relying and true to itself, there is nothing to fear, fear should be inadmissible. It is absolutely necessary that we should always be prepared for self-defence, in order that we may impose on arrogant ambition and church folly the benefits of an abiding peace. God demands compensation for his blessings, and we owe tranquility to the church.

One of our difficulties will be, to understand the official policy, it is a shifting policy, its ways are moveable, *that* thou canst not know *them*, except by constant watching and close tracing. Sometimes, we may as well expect speedy justice on a suit in chancery, that terrible screw and scourge. Meetings, and consultations, and opinions multiplied without end. They lead to long terms, and short terms, and procrastinations, which know no termination save the death of interested individuals, when new parties to the suit spring up, and on it was likely to go, no one knowing how or when it was at all likely to end. This has been somewhat the policy of the officials reformers from 1797 to 1857. At other times, lo! and behold, they take a sudden change, and may be compared to a ballet.—An attempt to represent a

story by means of dancing, in which the performers hop over the first part, skip over the second, and jump to an absurd conclusion in the third part. Our present officials have been trying their hands for the last seven years, relative to organization, in the chancery mode—but for the last few months they have been playing at hop, and skip, and jump at Amalgamation, for our dear people forsooth,—but at such official conduct, he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision, he will not suffer his church and people, his cause and interest in the world, to be thus everlastingly trifled with.

But our policy is plain, our trumpet gives not an uncertain sound for action. This should be regarded as "the set time" the tide is now strong, let us launch out into the deep,—may we see to it that we be not bound in the *shallows* of those official deadly sophistries, which come following softly, and are held up to the people as a standard for excellence. It is no trifle to make a stand against the tide of popular prejudice. But to foresee and prevent dangers is the province of the wise—to direct them when they come, of the brave.

Churches were always supposed to be models of order, they cannot work without it,—the church is the strictiest sphere of discipline,—hence its power. Power follows discipline, and dies when discipline is loosened. Unity, moreover, and decision are indispensable to it,—men have known this from the beginning, but there are various modes of realising it. Strength is one way, wealth is another, rank is a third, and merit is a fourth. It is very evident that merit is the best, if we could reach it, but the best of everything is always the most difficult to attain. True, a word to the wise is enough—but would it not be rather too much to expect the Methodist people to become at once wise enough for successful controversy, after having existed more than a century in error and slavery, and seeing they have so much to unlearn as well as everything to learn, relative to church government. It must take some time for the rubbish to be removed, before even the foundation can be *securely* laid—hence the necessity of going into details as well as principles. The errors of the reformers may be as thistles or thorns, comparatively soon plucked up, but those of the old Wesleyan body are like petrified old oaks, yet they must needs follow, and so, we calculate, must others do in Christendom before very many years are passed.

A mere profession is nothing—nothing, a mere clap-trap can make that. The mind—the mind—the soul—is every thing, that is the jewel to look to, and that is of a superior manufacture. We have seen and studied too much of human nature to be easily deceived, and, like him, with whom there is no half way, who, either loves or hates, we are living in the day when everything promises *ere long* to be tried by its merits, and not by its pretensions, when a man will not be esteemed a skilful physician because he has M.D. appended to his name,—nor a learned civil lawyer, becauae he has a D.C.L.—nor an orthodox divine, because he is a D.D.

Each party has its own vested interests, and each corporate body likes to preserve those interests, at least in its own day. "Give Peace in our time" says the parson every Sunday morning, and "meddle not with them that are given to change," is a two edged sword that will cut both ways. But, notwithstanding all efforts to fix knowledge, and establish modes, whether of science, or church polity, it is a fact that the world moves on, and even that rustiest of all institutions, the church, has oiled its wheels, added another to its long list of prescriptions to be taken, or the consequences will be serious. The future is a sealed book to man, but the past forms a lesson from which he may glean the knowledge that shall enable him to avoid many of the quicksands and rocks in after times, that impeded his career in by-gone days.

Let it be understood, that we shall not have to expend all our laudable hatred on official despots, in the prosecution of the present work, we trust that, whosoever may be found to be enemies against reform, shall have a due proportion of complaint allotted them. The private members themselves must not expect to escape, when their reprehensible ignorance or indifference stands in the way. We must frankly acknowledge that, sometimes, we have been quite at a loss to decide where the greatest difficulties exist, whether from the despotism of joint officials, or from the slavish ignorance and indifference of some of the private members. However, it will be found essentially necessary to look both evils in the face. For while the officials' greatest trust is in the ignorance of the private members, ours must be in their wisdom, their intelligence, and in their prudential and right exercise of their common sense—which is, and must ever be, a terror to official evil doers.—The people themselves should rely on

no superiority on account of numbers, but only that of worth and wisdom. The more true merit a man has, the more does he applaud it in others.

The various Methodist people are swayed by divers opinions, and, in the matter of discipline especially, are too well content to rely on the judgment of those, whose own acknowledged superiority in that particular is not always accompanied by generous feeling, or even a common leaning towards fair play. Hence the necessity of the people being enabled to judge for themselves, on such an important subject.

But here is the difficulty, knowledge is humiliated, it is the habit and custom of the Methodist people at large to humble it. Much as they may have heard about principle, they really, as a people, care little about it,—and know less.—They are a practical rather than an understanding people.—To abstract knowledge they have the greatest aversion, and even of practical knowledge they are so impatient, that they are ever for beginning to work out the results, before they have succeeded in understanding the principle. Theoretical principles never were in vogue with the Methodist people, a mere theory is a bore to them, who begin to act the moment they imagine, or cease to imagine at all if immediate action be impossible.

There are some persons who study principles unpractically, but we Methodist practice carelessly, without principles at all. Hence it happens that we expose ourselves to imposition, and make work for ourselves to *undo*,—and all for want of a correct taste and habit.

The abstract study of principles is favorable to taste. It cultivates and refines, and intellectually elevates, and give those who pursue it a primary place in the sphere of quality of art, though it may leave them only a secondary place in respect to quantity. In this latter respect, the Methodist people certainly have no rivals. We work for the mass in the sphere of utility. But whenever a work of supreme knowledge and discernment is required, it is seldom that the Methodist people enjoy the order.

It is to correct this common defect in our education and industry, that means for producing demonstrative knowledge for correct and successful design is wanted, and the time and money expended on such means would contribute not only to the profit but the honour of the people. It is because we

have hitherto neglected such things, and depreciated the imaginative in thought, that we are so far behind. We hesitate not to affirm,—were the Methodist people to take the lead in knowledge and design, as well as in common-place utility, they would then become second to no people on earth. Everything would bespeak the presence of an intelligent presiding power, fully alive to the beauty of order. But we have been too busy with fancies of the past, to speculate about the present. That power of imagination is a happy gift when properly exercised, but it may blacken what is already dark, as well as add brightness to the sunshine. The abuse of such gifts is to be deplored, relative to the consequences in this world, and in the world to come!

But it may be better not to press recommendations on unwilling ears. There are many different spheres of religious, moral, and intellectual being, and one sphere cannot well understand either the thoughts or feelings of another sphere. When you understand, admire, and appreciate what another cannot, then you belong to another sphere. But again, there are some who will not inquire, who shut their eyes and their ears, these cannot belong to the same sphere as those with open eyes and ears. The time will come when all eyes and ears will be opened,—but at present there are, comparatively, very few that can see or hear anything out of a miniature world of their own personal interest and relationship, and the question with them is not so much, "what is right or wrong," as "What will our Leaders say?"

We hesitate not to affirm, that such like blunders have been the bane of all former Methodist agitation for reform. True, high sounding liberal profession was made. But yet it failed, for it did it all in ignorance. It produced a re-action which only begot a new species of corruption. This re-action consisted in that sort of logic, which finds an excuse for any or every species of error. And we see the effects of it to this day, remarkably developed in the many local officials, professedly reformers. Thus, for instance, the singular unconsciousness amongst them of the sanctity of the truth for governing purposes in the church, may be traced to the teachings of the old systems, many of which were of opinion, that "we rule as representatives by virtue of our office," and "even by apostolical usage" were not a violation of the truth. "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren," and

therefore that it was not a deadly sin to speak falsely under such an adjustment. We do not know but that many of the private members also hold the same opinion to this day, for nothing else so charitably accounts for the facility and indifference with which they take the requisite declarations "on the faith of a reformer."

But delusions, however sweet, are transitory. These beautiful fancies quickly fade before the substance of reality. The word *religion* means *union*, a binding together with a sacred bond of peace. The bond must be sacred, or the union is merely a club, an association, or society. We ought to rise above gossip and prejudice, but as reformers, we are young, and age should bring wisdom. Officials, perhaps, are little aware how much they themselves are the cause of estrangement in private members. It is curious to trace this estrangement from early to mature age, how slowly but surely it grows, and mastering and lording, and the keeping up of a distinct partition.

As for yielding, who can yield decided principles? They are not your own to yield, they govern you, not you them.

Ah! if we were not born for a life of equality, at least religion has made us understand it, and the circumstances of our condition have revealed to us the absurdities of the prejudices of official rank. They pass their time in that exhausted air machine, which they call the dignity of their office. They must die embalmed in their majesty like mummies,—without the trial of equality so debasing, so miserable. They find not in those beings so far removed from them, creatures resembling them in their essence, their equals before God, as highly gifted by nature as themselves, and as important in the world, where they had flattered themselves they were superior to all others.

What could mere officials who meddle with Methodistical interest, make of the axiom, that "by the soul only, the people shall be great and free," the man who sees nothing but defective office-keeping, when the whole body politic is rotten, and demoniacally possessed by the evil spirit of mystery and diplomatic fraud? Exposure of particular abuses is a good work as far as it goes, but no appeal will sufficiently rouse the people, that is not based upon higher and firmer ground than that of saving a clique. If the Official Reformers dare not stir up a strong sense of duty, dare not rouse the people to a sense of their position and functions as the foremost and only free contending Methodist section, all the prattling of the bad

office-keeping in their ears will be idle and vain. There must be a supply of evidence against the *system*, appropriate remedies prescribed, and that high tone of feeling generated that will supply a moral atmosphere, in which alone it is possible to carry on a successful struggle. An honest, manly, intelligent state of the connexional mind is a condition that must precede any available Reform, and that condition of mind once excited will not stop at better connexional office-keeping, but demand institutions in harmony with great principles of justice, and capable of giving vigorous expression to the People's Will.

"The Lord helps those who help themselves." Not that education creates mind, but it draws it out, refines it, enlarges it, corrects and matures it. Much as may be done towards self-education, yet it may be better to give us this subject ready digested in the holy Scriptures, than oblige us to collect it by our own meditation. We recall then, on this article, expressions of a sacred writer. The apostle Paul had his faith and patience exercised in this work of instruction. The epistle to the Hebrews, which may be considered as the apostle's principal work, treats of the most difficult points of divinity and morality. In particular this is the idea that must be formed of Melchisedech's priesthood, as a prefiguration of Jesus Christ. This mysterious subject the Apostle had begun to discuss, but had not proceeded far in it before he found himself at a stand, by recollecting the character of those to whom he was writing. He reproves some Christians for their little knowledge, and exhorts them to increase it. Hear him! "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of age have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, *let us go on unto perfection*, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God. And this will we do if God permit." He describes them, in the above text, as men who were grown old in the profession of Christianity indeed, but who knew nothing more of it than its first principles, and he endeavours to

animate them with the laudable ambition of penetrating the noblest parts of that excellent system of religion, which Jesus Christ had published, and which his Apostles had explained in all its beauty, and in all its extent. Now the Apostle wishes that the Hebrews, *leaving these principles*, would aspire to be *perfect*,—*Let us go on unto perfection*, says he. This general notion of Paul's design may be the best comment on his meaning,—let us proceed from the rudimental state to a thorough acquaintance with that religion, which is *wisdom among them that are perfect*. By this system of doctrine we may understand that they were denominated *perfect*, who did not rest in a superficial knowledge, but who endeavoured thoroughly to understand the whole. It would appear that this was the design of Paul in writing to the Hebrews.

Here we are disposed to extend our ideas beyond that which may be regarded as a direct and exclusive bearing on the subject in controversy, in order that we may become acquainted with the necessary *discipline*. That should be regarded as the secret of future success,—to be *well-disciplined*. It has been said of Alexander the Great, that he owed much of his success to the well-disciplined army raised by his father, Philip of Macedonia,—WHO SO DISCIPLINED HIS ARMY THAT EACH OF HIS SOLDIERS WAS FIT TO TAKE THE COMMAND,—thus much for the advantage of the art of military order. And, to be well disciplined in spiritual matters, is to enable us to form CORRECT SYSTEMS FOR OURSELVES,—*Even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.* In the *adult Christian* these senses are said to be *exercised*, a metaphor taken from the *contenders* in the Grecian games, who were wont to employ all their power, skill, and agility in mock fights, running, wrestling, &c., that they might be the better prepared for the actual contests when they took place. So these employ and improve all their powers, and in using grace get more grace, and thus, being able to discern good from evil, they are in little danger of being imposed on by false doctrine, or by the pretensions of hypocrites, or of being deceived by the subtleties of Satan. They feel that their security depends, under God, on this exercise,—on the proper use which they make of the grace already given them by God.

The present work being a subject for education on the most important of all matters, we do well to ask ourselves,—Understandest thou what thou readest? There is another

ingredient of a good education, besides a love for loose and impulsive reading, which some persons will voluntarily give to themselves ;—there needs another and more rigorous kind, which we should suffer to be imposed upon us. And this is the very point,—a tedious process, form gradually an interior separate intellect, exact in its formation, rigid in its requirements, disciplined in exercises. The two grow together, the natural fancy touching the far extremities of many subjects, lightly playing with the scheme of all things, the precise compacted memory slowly accumulating special facts, exact habits, clear and powerful conceptions. At last the clouds break up, the divisions sweep away, we find that in fact these exercises which puzzled us, these details which we disliked, are the instruments of true thought, are the very keys and openings, the exclusive access to the knowledge which we love.

It is evident from the nature of Christianity, that we can neither see its beauties, nor reap its benefits, while we attend only to some loose principles, and do not consider the whole system, for the truth of religion forms a system, a body of coherent doctrines closely connected, and in perfect harmony. Nothing better distinguisheth the accurate judgment of a philosopher, than the connexion of his systems. Unconnected systems, in which the author is determined only by caprice and chance, as it were, are less worthy of rational beings, than of creatures destitute of rational intelligence, whom nature has formed capable of producing sounds indeed, but not of forming ideas. Systems should be connected, each part should occupy the place which order and accuracy, not caprice and chance, assign it. They should resemble buildings constructed according to the rules of art, the laws of which are never arbitrary, but fixed and inviolable, founded on the nature of regularity and proportion, or to use St. Paul's expression, each should be "a body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth."

Let us apply this to the subject in hand. Nothing better proves the divinity of religion, than the connexion, the harmony, the agreement of its component parts. No doubt that this grand characteristic of Christianity hath occasioned many mistakes among mankind. Under pretence that a religion proceeding from God must harmonise in its component parts, men have unrestrainedly contrived a chain of propositions to

please themselves. They have substituted a phantom of their own imaginations, for that body of doctrine which God hath given us in the Holy Scriptures.—Hence so much obstinacy in maintaining, after so much rashness and presumption in advancing such phantoms. For, of all obstinate people, none excel more in their dreadful kind, than those who are prejudiced in favour of certain systems. A man who does not think himself capable of forming a connected system, can bear contradiction, because if he be obliged to give up some of the propositions which he hath advanced, some others which he embraces will not be disputed, and what remains may indemnify him for what he surrenders. But a man prepossessed with an imaginary system of his own has seldom so much teachableness. He knows, that if one link be taken away his chain falls to pieces, and that there is no removing a single stone from his building without destroying the whole edifice.

But if infatuation with systems has occasioned so many disorders in the church, the opposite disposition, we mean, the obstinate rejection of all, or the careless composition of some, hath been equally hurtful, for it is no less dangerous, in a system of religion, to omit what really belongs to it, than to incorporate anything foreign from it. To be more explicit.—There are two sorts of truths in religion, truths of speculation, and truths of practice. Each truth is connected, not only with other truths in its own class, but truths of the first-class are connected with those of the second, and of those parts thus united is composed that admirable body of doctrine which forms the system of religion.

There are in religion some truths of speculation, there is a chain of doctrines. God is holy, this is the first truth. A holy God can have no intimate communion with unholy creatures,—this is a second truth which follows from the first truth. God, who can have no communion with unholy creatures, can have no communion with men who are unholy creatures, this is a third truth, which follows from the second. Men who are unholy creatures, being incapable, as such, of communion with the holy God, must on that very account be entirely miserable, this is a fourth truth, which follows from the third.

Men, who must be absolutely miserable, because they can have no communion with the holy, happy God, become

objects of the compassion of that God, who is as loving and merciful, as he is happy and holy,—this is a fifth truth, which follows from the fourth. This loving and merciful God is naturally inclined to relieve the multitude of his creatures, who are ready to be plunged into the deepest miseries,—this is a sixth truth, which follows from the fifth.

Thus follow the thread of Jesus Christ's theology, and you will find, as we said, each part that composetb it depends on another, and every one giving another the hand. For, from the loving and merciful inclination of God to relieve the multitude of his creatures from a threatening abyss of the deepest miseries, follows the mission of Jesus Christ, because it was fit that the remedy chosen of God to relieve the miseries of men should bear a proportion to the cause which produced it. From the doctrine of Jesus Christ's mission follows the necessity of the Spirit of God, because it would have been impossible for men to have discovered by their own speculations the way of salvation, according to that saying, "Things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, God hath revealed unto us by his spirit." From the doctrine of the Son of God, and of the gift of the Holy Spirit, follows this most comfortable truth, that we are the objects of the love of God, even of love the most vehement and sincere that can be imagined, for "God commended his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." And, as we are objects of that love which God hath commended to us in his Son, it follows, that no bounds can be set to our happiness, that there is no treasure too rich in the mines of *the blessed God*, no duration too long in eternity, no communion with the Creator too close, too intimate, too tender, which we have not a right to expect, according to that comfortable, that ecstatic maxim of St. Paul, God, who "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things."

This is a chain of some truths of the Gospel. We do not pretend to give a complete system of the doctrines of the gospel, we only say that the doctrines proposed are closely connected, and that one produceth another, in a system of speculative gospel truths.

In like manner, there is a connection between practical truths. The class of practical truths is connected with the class of speculative truths, and each practical truth is connected

with another practical truth. The class of practical truths is connected with the class of speculative truths. As soon as ever we are convinced of the truth of the doctrines just now mentioned, we shall be thereby convinced that we are under an indispensable necessity to devote ourselves to holiness.—People, who draw consequences from our doctrines injurious to morality, fall into the most gross and palpable of all contradictions. The single doctrine of Jesus Christ's mission naturally produceth the necessity of sanctification. Ye believe that the love of holiness is so essential to God, that rather than pardon criminals without punishing their crimes, he hath punished his own Son. And can ye believe that the God to whom holiness is essential, will bear with you, while ye make no effort to be holy? In the first supposition, ye conceive a God to whom sin is infinitely odious, in the second, ye conceive a God to whom sin is infinitely tolerable. In the first supposition, ye conceive a God, who, by the holiness of his nature, exacts a satisfaction,—in the second, ye conceive a God, who, by the indifference of his nature, loves the sinner, while he derives no motives from the satisfaction to forsake his sins. In the first supposition, ye imagine a God who opposeth the strongest barriers against vice,—in the second, ye imagine a God who removeth every obstacle to vice, nothing being more likely to confirm men in sin than an imagination, that, to what length soever they go, they may always find, in the sacrifice of God, an infallible way of avoiding the punishment due to their sins, whenever they shall have recourse to that sacrifice. Were it necessary to enlarge this article, and to take one doctrine after another, you would see that every doctrine of religion proves what we have advanced concerning the natural connection of religious speculative truths with truths of practice.

But, if practical truths of religion are connected with speculative truths, each of the truths of practice is also closely connected with another. All virtues mutually support each other, and there is no invalidating one part of our morality, without, on that very account, invalidating the whole.

In treatises of morality, there are usually assigned three objects to our virtues. The first of these objects is God, the second is our neighbour, and the third ourselves. St. Paul is the author of this division,—"The grace of God that bringing salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that

denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." But all these are connected together, for we cannot live *godly*, without living at the same time righteously and soberly, because to live *godly* is to perform what religion appoints, and to take that perfect Being for our example, to whom religion conducts and unites us. Now to live as religion appoints, and to take that perfect Being for our pattern, to whom religion conducts and unites us, is to live *righteously* with our neighbour, and *soberly* with ourselves. Strictly speaking, we have not one virtue unless we have all virtues, nor are we free from one vice unless we be free from all vices, we are not truly charitable unless we are truly just, nor are we truly just unless we be truly charitable. As we said before, all virtues naturally follow one another, and afford each other a mutual support.

Such is the chain of religious truths, such is the connection, not only of each truth of speculation with another truth of speculation, but of speculative truths with the truths of practice. There is then a series of links, a harmony, a connection in the truths of religion, there is a system, a body of doctrine in the gospel. This is the article that we proposed to prove.

But, a religion in which there is such a chain, such a harmony and connection, a body of doctrine so systematically compacted and united, ought not to be taken by bits and parts.

To illustrate this we may compare spiritual with natural things. The more art and ingenuity there is in a machine composed of divers wheels, the more necessary it is to consider it in its whole and in all its arrangements, and the more does its beauty escape our observation, when we confine our attention to a single wheel, because the more art there is in a machine the more essential is the minutest part to its perfection. Now, deprive a machine of an essential part, and you deface and destroy it.

Apply this to spiritual things,—In a compact system, in a coherent body of doctrine, there is nothing useless, nothing which ought not to occupy the very place that the genius who composed the whole hath given it. What will become of religion if ye consider any of its doctrines separately? What becomes of religion if ye consider the holiness of God without his justice, or his justice without his mercy?

Let us then proceed to enquire why so many of us confine ourselves to a small number of religious truths, and incapac-

itate ourselves for examining the whole system. The fact is too certain. Hence, our teachers seem to lead us in obscure paths, and to lose us in abstract speculations, when they treat of some of the attributes of God, such as his faithfulness, his love of order, his regard for his intelligent creatures. It is owing to this that we are, in some sense, well acquainted with some truths of religion, while we remain entirely ignorant of others, which are equally plain, and equally important. Hence it is that the greatest part of our instructions produce so little fruit, because instructions are, at least they ought to be, connected discourses, in which principle founds the consequence, and the consequence follows the principle, all which supposes in the hearers or readers a habit of meditation and attention. For the same reason we are apt to be offended when anybody attempts to draw us out of the sphere of our prejudices, and are not only ignorant, but, (it may be) ignorant with gravity, and derive we know not what glory from our own stupidity. Hence it is that a person is seldom or never allowed to extend in his opinions, to rise into the contemplation of some important objects, but must always descend to the *first principles* of religion, as if he had spoken for the first time, or his auditors for the first time heard. Hence also it is that some doctrines, which are true in themselves, demonstrated in our Scriptures, and essential to religion, become errors, yea sources of many errors in our mouths, because we consider them only in themselves, and not in connection with other doctrines, or in the proper place to which they belong in the system of religion. This might be easily proved in regard to the doctrines of the mercy of God in Jesus Christ, the sacrifice of the cross, the necessity of the Holy Spirit's assistance, doctrines true, demonstrated, essential, but doctrines which will precipitate us from one abyss to another, if we consider them as they have been too often considered by some parties, in an abstract and detached manner. The fact then is too certain. Let us attend to the principal cause of it.

Two principal causes may be assigned, Firstly, a party-spirit, and Secondly, a want of zeal for our own salvation. As we shall take the liberty of pointing out the causes of this malady, we shall also prescribe the remedy, whether our most humble remonstrance regard the people themselves, or even their teachers, whose noblest office, as well as most sacred and inviolable duty, it is to watch for the support of the truth.

The first cause that we have assigned is a *Party-spirit.* This is a disposition that cannot be easily defined, and it would be difficult to include in a definition of it even its genus and species. It is a monstrous composition of all bad genera and of all bad species. It is a hydra that reproduceth while it seemeth to destroy itself, and which, when one head hath been cut off, instantly produceth a hundred more. Sometimes it is superstition, which inclines us to deify certain idols, and after having formed, to prostrate first before them. Sometimes it is ignorance which prevents our preceiving the importance of some revealed truths, or the dreadful consequences of some prejudices that we had embraced in childhood. Sometimes it is arrogance, which rashly maintains whatever it hath once advanced, advanced perhaps at first inconsiderately, but which will afterwards be resolutely defended till death, for no other reason but because it hath been once asserted, and because it is too mortifying to yield and say, *I am wrong, I was mistaken.* Sometimes it is a spirit of malice and barbarity, which abhors, exclaims against, persecutes, and would even exterminate all who dare contradict its oraculous propositions. Oftener still it is the union of all these vices together. A party-spirit is that disposition which envenoms so many hearts, separates so many friends, divides so many societies, which hath produced so many excommunications, thundered out so many anathemas, drawn up so many canons, assembled so many councils, and hath been so often on the point of subverting the great work of reformation, the noblest opposition that was ever formed against it.

This spirit, which we have faintly described, must naturally incapacitate a man for considering the whole of religion, it must naturally incline him to take it only by bits and shreds. On the one hand, it contracts the mind, for how can a soul that harboureth and cherisheth all the phantoms which a party-spirit produceth, how can such a soul study and meditate as religion requires! On the other hand, a party-spirit depraves the heart and eradicates the desire of knowing the truth. A man animated with the spirit of party directeth all his attention to such propositions of religion as seem to favour his erroneous opinions, and irregular notions, and diverts it from all that oppose them, his system includes only what strengthens his party, it is exclusive of everything that weakens or opposes it.

This is the first cause of the malady. The remedy is easily discovered. Let us divest ourselves of a party-spirit. Let us never determine an opinion, by its agreement or disagreement with what our teachers have inculcated, but by its conformity or contrariety to the doctrine of Jesus Christ and his apostles. Let us never receive or reject a maxim because it favors or opposes our passions, but as it agrees with or opposes the laws of that tribunal, the basis of which are justice and truth. Let us be fully convinced that our chief study should be to know what God determines, and to make his commands the only rules of our knowledge and practice.

The last cause of the incapacity of so many professing Christians, for seeing the whole of religion in its connection and harmony, the last cause of their taking it only by bits and shreds, is their want of true zeal, a comprehensive and right directed zeal. Be it observed,—We are now addressing ourselves to professing Christians.

A man, who truly loves God, hath sentiments of zeal and fervour. Observe David, see his joy before the ark,—neither the royal grandeur, nor the prophetical gravity, nor the gazing of the populace, nor the reproaches of an interested wife, could cool his zeal. Observe Elijah, "I have been," said he "very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts, for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword, and I, even I, only am left, and they seek my life to take it away." Behold good Eli, the frost of four-score years could not chill the ardour that inflamed him. *What is there done, my Son?* said he to the unwelcome messenger, who came to inform him of the defeat of his army, the messenger replied, *Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath also been a great slaughter among the people*, and thy two *sons* Haphni and Phinehas. Thus far he supported himself, but when the man went on to say, *the ark of God is taken*, he could not survive the loss of that symbol of the divine presence, but died with grief. Observe Nehemiah, to whom his royal master put the question, *Why is thy countenance sad?* said he, *Why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?* Consider St. Paul, *We glory in tribulations, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

Do you imagine you truly love God, while you have only languid emotions towards him, the welfare of his cause, and while you reserve all your activity and fire for your worldly concerns. And do you conceive, that, while indulging in indifference, you can arrive at a knowledge of the truth.—You may not be chargeable with entire unconcern,—but without zeal, your enquiry after truth, may be questionable, like that of Pilate's, he asked of Christ "what is truth?" and there are two things remarkable following that question. The first is, that Christ did not answer it, and the second is, that Pilate did not think worth while to ask it a second time; therefore that disposition in him must account for the silence of Christ to such an important question as "what is truth?" Recollect here, that general notion of religion which we have laid down, contains truths of speculation, and truths of practice. Such a lukewarm spirit as we have just now mentioned, forms invincible obstacles to the knowledge of both.—How is it possible for a man to obtain a complete system of the doctrines of the gospel, while he is a slave to indolence.

To obtain a complete system of the doctrines of the gospel, there must be a certain habit of thinking and meditation. In vain ye turn over whole volumes, in vain ye attend lectures, in vain ye parade with bodies of divinity, ye can never comprehend the connection of religious truths, unless ye acquire a habit of arranging ideas, of laying down principles, of deducing consequences, in short of forming systems for yourselves. This habit cannot be acquired without exercise, it is unattainable without serious attention and close application. But how can people given up to indolence acquire such a habit.—A slothful disposition is a constant source of hindrance to any successful studying. To counterbalance the difficulty of meditation and study, there must be a relish for it. Those who make study a mere duty, seldom make any very great progress in knowledge, at least a great difference has always been observed between the proficiency of those who study by inclination, and those who study by mere necessity. In the one, hours and minutes are counted, and the happiest period is that which terminates the pursuit,—but, in the other, time glides away imperceptibly, and people wish for the power of prolonging the course of opportunities.

To acquire a complete knowledge of religious truths, it is not enough to study them in the closet, in retirement and

silence, we must converse with others who study them too.—But a cold heart indisposes us for such conversation. Slaves to indifference have but little taste for those delightful societies whose mutual bond is utility, in which impartial inquirers propose their doubts, raise their objections, communicate their discoveries, and reciprocally assist each other's edification. For to disturb those who love ease, on serious and deep subjects, beyond the surface of common-place matters, conversation instantly languishes, and converse is at an end.

But if the want of zeal raises such obstacles to the knowledge of speculative truths, it raises incomparably greater still to the truths of practice. There are some scripture maxims which are never thought of by the persons in question, except it be to weaken and destroy them, at least, they make no part of their system of morality.

In your system of morality, what becomes of scripture exhortations to "redeem the time, to know the time of our visitation, to do all that our hands find to do, because there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither we go?" The love of ease inclines mortals, who may die in a few days, people who perhaps have only a few days to bid their last adieus, to embrace their families, to settle temporal affairs, to examine the neglected parts of religion, to prepare themselves to appear before that terrible tribunal to which death cites them. It is for lack of zeal these poor creatures, who have so short a time to live, and so great a task to perform, waste a considerable part of this fleeting life in idleness, that obliterates both the shortness of life, and the necessity of death.

All these causes of the infancy and noviciate of professing christians in regard to religion, unite in one, which we cannot but lament, nor can we lament it too much. We do not understand our own religion, we are, most of us, incapable of perceiving the admirable order, the beautiful symmetry of its component parts. Why? It is because we have so little zeal for our salvation, it is because we form such languid desires to be saved.

Indeed we know, that, except some unnatural creatures, except some monsters, to whom this work is not addressed, everybody professes to desire to be saved, yea, to prefer salvation to everything else in this life. But, when the attainment of it in God's way is in question, in this only that

agrees with the holiness of his nature to direct, and with our happiness to obey, what a number of people do we meet with whose desires vanish? I desire to be saved, says each to himself, I desire to be saved, but not by such a religion as the gospel prescribes, such as Jesus Christ preached, such as the apostles and ministers of the gospel preach after him, but I desire to be saved by such a religion as I have conceived, such a one as gratifies my views. I desire to be saved, but it is on condition, that, while I obey some of the precepts of Jesus Christ, he will dispense with my obedience of others, I desire to be saved, but not on condition of my correcting my prejudices, and submitting them to the precepts of Jesus Christ, but on condition that the precepts of Jesus Christ should yield to my prejudices. I desire to be saved, but on condition of retaining my prepossessions, the system that I have arranged, the way of life that I pursue, and intend to pursue till I die. To desire salvation in this manner, is too common a disposition among professing Christians. But to desire salvation in saying to God, with a sincere desire of obeying his voice, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* Lord, what wilt thou have me to love? Lord, what inclinations wilt thou have me to oppose, to mortify, to sacrifice? To be willing to be saved in receiving, without exception, all the practical truths, which compose an essential part of that religion which God hath given us. Ah! how rare is this disposition among professing Christians!

Without this disposition however, (and let us not be ingenious to deceive ourselves,) without this disposition there is no salvation. It implies a contradiction to say that God will save us in any other way, for as it is contradictory to say that he will give to bodies the properties of spirits, or to spirits the property of bodies, so also is it a contradiction to say that error shall reap the rewards of truth, that the highway to confusion and misery is the path to order and happiness.

It remains to ask you, what are your intentions? What designs have ye formed? What projects do ye resolve to pursue? Can ye conceive a nobler hope than that of being saved! Can ye propose a more advantageous end than your own salvation? Will ye destroy yourselves? Do ye renounce those delightful hopes that are set before you in the gospel? And shall all the fruit of your instruction be to accuse and confound you before God?

We may live a few years longer, but, at the expiration of those few years, time finishes and eternity begins. A few years, a few months, a few days more, and behold your race is at an end, behold your time finishes and your eternity begins. And can we resist this idea! Alas! what hearts! what Christians! what a church!

May Almighty God arouse us, may we derive from the bosom of infinite mercies what we despair of obtaining from the insensibility of our hearts. May the Author of religion, that divine Spirit, from whom alone could proceed this beautiful system which he hath condescended to reveal to us, impress it in all its parts on our minds. Pluck up every plant which his good hand hath not planted. Triumph over all the obstacles that our errors oppose to his empire. Shut the gulphs of error and sin. Open the gates of truth and holiness. Save us, even in spite of ourselves, so far as it can be consistent with his word, with the divine oracles given us to make us wise unto salvation.

We would move heaven and earth, in order that the Methodist people may become true *disciplinarians* in the *reform* of Methodism, inasmuch as the essentials consist in Christian knowledge, Christian experience, and Christian practice. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." In law, it is a want of knowledge of the laws, which will not excuse a person from suffering the penalty inflicted on the breach of them, for every one, at his peril, is obliged to know the laws of the land. But, brethren, "If ye know these things? ah, how long are we "to stand in doubt" of one another? "How long halt ye between two opinions"? Are we ready to acknowledge to the charge of the apostle, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again, which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God." And, are we prepared to suffer his word of exhortation—"Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, go on unto perfection," and not ever learning, and never able to come to the full knowledge of the truth.

And it must be hoped that we shall yet be enabled to retrieve our Christian character, by strict, constant, and due attention to the divine oracles. These oracles signifying *divine revelation* in general, because all delivered immediately from God, the holy men of old having spoken by the inspiration of the divine Spirit. When it is considered what respect

was paid by the heathens to their *oracles*, which were supposed to be delivered by those gods who were the objects of their adoration, but which were only impostures, we may then learn what respect is due to the *true oracles* of God.

Among the ancients the credit of oracles was so great, that in all doubts and disputes their determinations were held sacred and inviolable, whence vast numbers flocked to them for advice in the management of their affairs, and no business of any importance was undertaken, scarcely any war waged or peace concluded, any new form of government instituted, or new laws enacted, without the advice and approbation of the oracle. An Athenian law-giver, professed to receive instructions from Jupiter how to model his intended government, a legislator of Sparta, made frequent visits to Delphian Apollo, and received from him the platform of the Lacedemonian commonwealth—so history informs us.

What a reproach to Christians, who hold the bible to be a collection of the oracles of God, and who not only do not consult it in the momentous concerns of either this or the future life, but go in direct opposition to it! Were everything conducted according to these oracles, we should have neither war nor desolation on the earth, families and churches would be well governed, and individuals universally made happy.

Those who consulted the ancient oracles were obliged to go to enormous expense, both in *sacrifices* and in *presents* to the priests, and when they had done so, they received oracles which were so equivocal, that, howsoever the event fell out, they were capable of being interpreted *that way*.

Not so the first Christians, relative to the divine oracles, "They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily whether those things were so." "Comparing spiritual things with spiritual." Therefore, we have a *right*, as it is our duty and privilege, to be "followers of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises," whosoever may be found to oppose our claim to that right.

At the outset, we come in contact with the opponents of *equal rights*. Be it well understood,—That this is now the tug of war between parties contending for, and against the right. But one thought may have confused and checked us, though not hindered altogether, and while we proceed with the work we do *feel* from it. We are struck with an idea of the different degrees of labour necessary to two men, one of

whom should conceive the project of disuniting Christians and the other that of cementing them together in mutual love. The first need not trouble himself with study, examination, and argument, he would not be obliged either to divest himself of his own prepossessions, or to expose those of others, he need not sit whole days and nights either to examine coolly his own theses, or impartially to weigh those of his opponents, let him only take popular prejudices, cover them with the sacred style of scripture, or conceal them under some impenetrable jargon, let him animate them with party spirit, call it religious zeal, and denounce judgment on all who do not believe the whole to be essential to salvation, and the work will be done. Such a man may resemble a light-heeled enemy tripping over a spacious field, and scattering, as he goes, the seeds of an endless number of weeds, while the man who adopts a contrary plan, and fetching many a sigh, to pull the noxious produce up,—finds the accumulated errors of more than a hundred years, propagated and acted on by thousands of individuals, and submitted to and supported by hundreds of thousands, are not easily eradicated and rectified,—although it can be accomplished by the due *application* of *the truth*.

Before we shall attempt further to urge you on in this duty, so that you may become scripture critics, relative to its doctrines, and its constitution and government of the Christian church, we shall have to draw your attention to some general principles, with a view to a demonstration of the right itself. To pretend to examine Christianity, before we have established our right to do so, is to pretend to cultivate an estate, before we have made out our title to it.

Christianity is a religion of divine original,—a religion of divine original must needs be a perfect religion, and answer all the ends for which it was revealed, without human additions. The Christian religion hath undergone considerable alterations since the times of Jesus Christ and his apostles, and yet *Jesus Christ* was then accounted *the finisher*, as well as *the author of faith*. The doctrines of revelation, as they lie in the inspired writings, differ very much from the same doctrines, as they lie in creeds of human composition. The moral precepts, the positive institutes, and the religions which constitute the devotions of some modern christians, form a melancholy contrast to those, which are described by the guides whom they profess to follow. The light of nature,

and that of revelation, the operations of right reason, the spirit of the first, and the influence of the Holy Ghost, the soul of the last, both proceeding from the same uniform Supreme Being, cannot be supposed to be destructive of each other, or, even in the least degree, to clash together. The finest idea that can be formed of the Supreme Being, is that of an infinite intelligence always in harmony with itself, and, accordingly, the best way of proving the truth of revelation is that of shewing the analogy of the plan of redemption to that of creation and providence. By analogy is meant, a resemblance which one thing bears to another in some of its properties or qualities, though not in all. When we speak of the Divine Being, we are obliged to have recourse to this method of expressing ourselves, because divine matters are not the object of our senses, and cannot be conceived any other ways than by their similitude, proportion, or connection with sensible things, so that analogy means a resemblance in kind or sort, but a difference with respect to manner. Simplicity and majesty characterise both nature and scripture, simplicity reduces those benefits which are essential to the real happiness of man, to the size of all mankind, majesty makes a rich provision for the employment and superadded felicity of a few superior geniuses, who first improve themselves, and then felicitate their weaker brethren, by simplifying their own ideas, by refining and elevating those of their fellow creatures, by so establishing a social intercourse, consolidating fraternal love, and along with it all the reciprocal ties that unite mankind. Men's ideas of objects essential to their happiness are neither so dissimilar, nor so numerous, as inattentive spectators are apt to suppose. Variety of sentiment, which is the life of society, cannot be destructive of real religion. Mere mental errors, if they be not entirely innocent in the account of the Supreme Governor of mankind, cannot be, however, objects of blame and punishment among men. Christianity could never be intended to destroy the just natural rights, or even to diminish the natural privileges of mankind. That religion, which allows the just claims, and secures the social happiness of all mankind, must needs be a better religion than that which provides for only a part, at the expense of the rest. God is more glorified by the good actions of his creatures expressive of homage to him, than he is by uncertain conjectures, or even accurate notions, which originate in self-possession and ter-

minate in social disunion. How clear soever all these maxims may be, a certain degree of ambition, ignorance, presumption or indifference, or any other irregular passion, will render a man blind to the clearest demonstration, and insensible to the most rational and affecting persuasion. These positions, mere opinions and prepossessions before examination, become demonstrative truths after a diligent search. To this end these general principles should operate in the enquiry after important truths.

But, previous to all inquiries concerning the doctrines of Christianity, it is absolutely necessary to establish that of *Christian liberty*, for, say we what we will, if this preliminary doctrine of right be disallowed, voluntary piety is the dream of an enthusiast, the oracles of God in the christian world, like those of the Sybils in Pagan Rome, are sounds convertible to senatorial sense, and the whole christian mission, from the first prophet down to the minister of the day, is one long muster roll of statesmen's tools, a disgrace to their species, a contradiction to their profession, a dishonour to their God!

Christian liberty in Roman Catholic countries is liberty to be a Roman Catholic, that is, liberty to believe what the Bishop of Rome affirms to be true, and liberty to perform what he commands to be done. Christian liberty in some professed reformed and reforming churches is liberty to renounce what the reformers renounced, to believe what they affirmed, and to practice what they required. But we who *have* not so *learned Christ*, define Christian liberty otherwise, and if we be asked: What is Christian liberty? we answer: It is liberty to be a Christian. One part of Christianity consists of propositions to be believed. Liberty to be a Christian believer is liberty to examine these propositions, to form a judgment of them, and to come to a self-determination, according to our own best abilities. Another part of Christianity consists of duties to be performed. Liberty to be a practical Christian, is liberty to perform these duties, either as they regard God, our neighbour, or ourselves. Liberty to be a Christian implies liberty not to be a Christian, as liberty to examine a proposition, implies liberty to reject the arguments brought to support it, if they appear inconclusive, as well as liberty to admit them, if they appear demonstrative.

The object of Christian liberty, that with which a man who would examine Christianity has to do, is a system of

Christian doctrine, but, having established the doctrine of right, before we proceed to exercise this right by examining the religion proposed to mankind by Jesus Christ, it is absolutely necessary to inquire what we ought, on sound principles of justice and fair reasoning, to expect to find in it. We know some truths without revelation. We have a full demonstration in nature that there is one God—that he is an intelligent Spirit—that he is a wise and bountiful Being. Should any religion which pretends to be divine, affirm there is a plurality of Gods—God is not an intelligent spirit—God is an unwise and an unkind Being—we should have a right to reject this pretended revelation. Indeed, should a revealed religion allow our demonstrations, and afterwards explain them in a manner quite subversive of our former explications of them;—should it affirm God is as you say, a wise and bountiful Being, but he displays his wisdom and goodness not in governing his intelligent creatures as you have imagined, such a moral government, will prove to you, would shew a defect of wisdom and goodness, but he displays the supreme perfection of both by providing for such and such interests, and by bestowing such and such benefits, as have either escaped your notice, or were beyond your comprehension. In this case, we ought not to reject revelation, for, although we can demonstrate without inspiration the wisdom and goodness of God, yet we cannot pretend by the light of nature to know all the directions, and to ascertain all the limits of these perfections.

Lay Christianity before us who will, we expect to find three things in it, which we call analogy, proportion and perfection. Each of these articles opens a wide field of not incurious speculation, and each fully explained and applied would serve to guide any man in his choice of a religion, yea, in his choice of a party among the various divisions of christians, but alas! we are not employed now-a-days in examining and choosing religious principles for ourselves, but in subscribing, and defending those of our ancestors! A few hints then shall serve.

By *analogy* we mean resemblance, and, when we say revealed religion must bring along with it an analogical evidence, we mean, it must resemble the just dictates of nature, the reason is plain. The same Supreme Being is the author of both. The God of nature has formed man for observing objects, comparing them together, laying down

principles, inferring consequences, reasoning and self-determining, he has not only empowered all mankind to exercise these abilities, but has even constrained them by a necessity of nature to do so, he has rendered it impossible for men to exist safely in society without it. In a word, the God of nature has made man in his own image, self-determining being, and to say nothing of the nature of virtue, he has rendered free consent essential to every man's felicity and peace. With his own consent subjection makes him happy, without it dominion over the universe would make him miserable.

The religion of nature,—we mean by this expression here, the objects, which display the nature of the Deity, and thereby discover the obligation of mankind,—is in perfect harmony with the natural constitution of man. All natural objects offer evidence to all, but force it on none. A man may examine it, and he may not examine it, he may admit it, and he may reject it, and, if his rejection of the evidence of natural religion be not expressed in such overt acts as are injurious to the peace of civil society, no man is empowered to force him, or to punish him, the supreme moral Governor of the world himself does not distinguish him here by any exterior punishments, at the most he expresses his displeasure by marks attached to the person of the culprit, and concealed from all the rest of his fellow-creatures, and the glory of civil society is not to encroach on the moral government of God.

Christianity comes, pretends to come from the God of nature, we look for analogy, and we find it, but we find it in the holy scriptures, the first teachers, and the primitive churches. In all these, we are considered as rational creatures, objects are proposed, evidence is offered, if we admit it, we are not entitled thereby to any temporal emoluments, if we refuse it, we are not subjected to any temporal punishment, the whole is an affair of conscience, and lies between each individual and his God. We choose to be Christians on this very account. This freedom which we call a perfection of our nature, this self-determination, the dignity of our species, the essence of our natural virtue, this we do not forfeit by becoming Christians, this we retain, explained, confirmed, directed, assisted by the regal grant of the Son of God. Thus the prerogatives of Christ, the laws of his religion, and the natural rights of mankind being analogous, evidence arises of the divinity of the religion of Jesus.

We believe, it would be very easy to prove, that the Christianity of the Church of Rome, and that of every other establishment, because they are establishements, are totally destitute of this analogy. The religion of nature is not capable of establishments, the religion of Jesus Christ is not capable of establishments, if the religion of any church be capable of establishments, it is not analogous to thato f scripture, or that of nature. A very simple example may explain our meaning. Natural religion requires a man to pay a mental homage to the Deity, to venerate his perfections, by adoring and confiding in them. By what possible means can these pious operations of the mind be established? Could they be forced, their nature would be destroyed, and they would cease to be piety, which is an exercise of judgment and will. Revealed religion requires a man to pay a mental homage to the Deity through Jesus Christ, to venerate his perfections by adoring and confiding in them as Christianity directs, by repentance, by faith, by hope, and so on. How is it possible to establish those spiritual acts? A human establishment requires man to pay his Christian mental homage to the Deity by performing some external ceremony, suppose bowing to the East. The ceremony, we grant, may be established, but, the voluntary exercise of the soul in the performance, which is essential to the Christianity of the action, who in the world can establish this? If the religion of Jesus be considered as consisting of external rites and internal dispositions, the former may be established, but, be it remembered, the establishment of the exterior not only does not establish the interior, but the destruction of the last is previously essential to the establishment of the first.

No religion can be "established" without penal sanctions, and all penal sanctions in cases of religion are persecutions. Before a man can persecute, he must renounce the generous tolerant disposition of a Christian. No religion can be "established" without human creeds, and subscription to all human creeds implies two dispositions contrary to true religion, and both expressly forbidden by the author of it. These two dispositions are, love of dominion over conscience in the imposter, and abject preference of slavery in the subscriber. The first usurps the rights of Christ, the last swears allegiance to a pretender. The first domineers, and gives laws like a tyrant, the last truckles like a vassal. The first

assumes a dominion incompatible with his frailty, impossible even to his dignity, yea denied to the dignity of angels, the last yields a low submission, inconsistent with his own dignity, and ruinous to that very religion, which he pretends by this means to support. Jesus Christ does not require, he does not allow, yea he expressly forbids both these dispositions, well knowing, that an allowance of these would be a suppression of the finest dispositions of the human soul, and a degrading revelation beneath the religion of nature. If human inventions have formerly secularized Christianity, and rendered such bad dispositions necessary in times of ignorance, they ought to be exploded now, as all Christians now allow this theory. The Son of God did not come to render one part of mankind to serve the secular views, and unworthy passions of the other, but he obtained freedom for both, that both "*might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness all the days of their lives.*" When churches reduce this theory to practice, they realise in actual life what otherwise makes only a fine idea deciphered in books, and by so doing they adorn their Christianity with the glorious evidence of analogy. But to pursue this track no further, we hope nothing said will be deemed illiberal, we distinguish between a constitution of things, and some wise and good men, who submit to it, and we only venture to guess, if they be wise and good men under such inconveniences they would be wiser and better men without them,—at all adventures, if we owe much respect to men, we owe much more to truth, to inconvertible unchangeable truth.

It behoveth us to be well acquainted with our right, claim, privilege, which are synonymous. We should understand our right, claim it as such until this our privilege is secured, proving ourselves to be worthy of it in all its important and operative bearings—to be somewhat more explicit on *equal rights.*

A *right* is that which, it is always proper for us to possess, and to exercise. A *claim* is that which we have a right to prefer, while a *privilege* is a conventional right acquired by individuals, or by bodies of men.

Rights are all founded on the immutable laws of our nature, and are therefore in agreement with the rule of *true* in opposition to *false*, and of *right* as opposed to *wrong*, and of *good* as opposed to *evil*. It has been said that our *rights*

are either *native* or *conventional*, although it would be more proper to call them our *native rights*, and our *conventional claims*. Our *native rights* are given us by the Author of our being, and are in agreement with the nature which he has imparted, and as our nature is the same in all our species, so all our native rights must be equal and inalienable. Our native rights are prior to all our conventional claims, and are independent of all conventional obligations, they are all primitive and abstract things, and they are of divine authority, being entirely independent of all human law, or conventional duty. Our *claims* and *privileges* are all conventional things, excepting when we claim any natural right of which we have been forcibly deprived.

Liberty, in the sense of a free enjoyment of our native right, is what belongs to us as rational and accountable beings, and therefore when deprived of them, they become our highest claims, being absolutely and unconditionally ours. But *liberty* in such a case, can never be a privilege, excepting in the sense of an exemption from some conventional and arbitrary law. *Liberty*, in the sense of the power of doing what we please, is necessary to the moral freedom of mankind, but we can have no *right* to break the laws of moral obligation. Tyrants, indeed, are *privileged* to do what is wrong, but every man must ultimately give "an account of himself to God."

Between *Right* and *Power*, there is often as wide a difference as between right and wrong, truth and falsehood, and this will apply to both our *native rights*, and our *conventional claims*. We may have a right to do what we have no power to perform, and we may have a power to perform, that which we have no right to do. Slaves have a native right to that freedom which belongs to their own species, but while they are enslaved they have not the power to enjoy that freedom. We may have a *native claim* on all to which we have a native *right*, but we have a *conventional claim* only to that in which we have a conventional *right*. Our *native rights* are of Divine authority, and are in exact accordance with the native laws of moral obligation, but our conventional claims, being founded only on conventional law, may either be righteous or unrighteous, according to the laws on which they have been founded. Religious blessings, even when conventional, are of Divine authority, and are in agreement with the law of righteousness. Hence we read "To them gave he power

to become the sons of God." "Blessed are they which do his commandments, that they may have right to the Tree of Life."

Right, and power, and claim, are co-existent and inseparable. In human institutions, men may have a conventional *right* to do that which is morally wrong, but all those conventional laws which are not compatible with the great law of moral obligation, must be morally unrighteous. Native, or social obligation, must be the real foundation of all conventional laws, and when our conventional laws are in accordance with our moral obligations, all such conventional laws must be morally binding on mankind, for every conventional law must appeal to our native sense of moral obligation in support of its claims.

In conventional communities, men may be liberated from certain private obligations on account of their public services, with which such private duties may be deemed as incompatible, but there is no release from moral obligation. *Privileges* are conventional rights, or exemptions, granted to individuals or public bodies, and which must depend on the will of the granter, or on the circumstances of the services, and are all of them exemptions from some common obligation. All moral obligation is indispensable, and no man can be privileged to disobey. In like manner, all religious obligation is of Divine authority, from which no man can be released by privilege.

Christian blessings are all *privileges*, in the sense of an exception from guilt, and from the final sentence which awaits the wicked, but not in the sense of an exemption from any moral and religious obligation, inasmuch as "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." *Our* religious *rights* are *therefore*, not human, or inherent, but they are divinely conventional, arising entirely out of the covenant redemption, and the promise of eternal life through Jesus Christ, the Saviour of mankind.

The modern struggle is for individual rights. The development of the individual man seems to be one of the main efforts of modern times. Liberty has always been an object, but never so much as now. All the great movements of society have, more or less, this object in view. If the zeal of reformers be directed against abuses of any kind, it will ever

be found that these abuses are merely restrictions of individual liberty, monopolies confer powers on individuals and associations at the expense of the individual liberty of all the rest of the community.

Every right has also its corresponding wrong that is revealed along with it, as the shade is revealed with the light, and the shadow with the substance. Moreover, every man has a natural tendency to exaggerate his rights and diminish his wrongs, and this becomes the source of social unhappiness. All the quarrels of mankind originate thus, and the great effort of men in all ages has been to settle this question of the rights of individuals. At one time they are silenced by a master assuming all the rights to himself, and distributing their portion to each as he pleases. At another time a select portion combine with the one, for greater strength and security, and deprive the people of their individual rights, and invest themselves with that which they have extorted from others, and introduce a gradation of rights and wrongs which can never give satisfaction to the losers, whatsoever contentment it may bring to the winners.

In such a state of things the great mass of society are forbidden the free development of their natural talents. The freedom that common men enjoy in such a state must be of a very private and limited character. The field of liberty for the development of individual genius is in progress.

Long and weary were the ages that rolled over humanity before anything like a wide field of liberty was won for the individual. This could only be found in free associations. A man amongst the mountains, a hermit in the desert, is free enough to think, but then he can do nothing. Inventive genius has only a little field of liberty in the great field of nature. It is in the great field of society alone that it feels itself free. Communities, therefore, and large communities, are indispensable for its liberal and healthful exercise, where the old partition walls are left to decay, or removed as rubbish to give development to our institutions, as the spirit of individual liberty begun to develop itself, and impress every individual man with an idea of his dignity, and of his rights as an individual intelligence. In this one fact alone there is a character of liberty for the individual man to show himself as he is, or may become. Liberty, however, pure liberty, is not yet gained. The rough liberty, the root of the pure, is

merely growing. We have gained an enlargement of the field of development, but we are not yet free. Men are slaves in these lands, with all their Protestant boast, as well as in some other countries, and liberty is restrained by law, and bigotry, and fanaticism, and ignorance, which are so many yet indispensable obstacles and fetters to the ardent and impassioned mind, which longs, perhaps wildly endeavours, to exceed the bounds of propriety which society has fixed for individual indulgence.

What walls once did by way of personal and operative restrictions, is now done in many lands by way of mental imprisonment. Who more free than the philosophers of Greece in the discussion of philosophical and religious questions? The school of Athens enjoyed a liberty which has never been exceeded in modern times, but then they were personally and physically restricted in the pursuit of material science. For want of that science their metaphysical philosophy was inconclusive and so far worthless, it perished as it deserved to perish, amid the ruins of the old world. Then society was almost totally dissolved, the large cities became small again, the great armies were divided into little ones, the great empire into small kingdoms, men were scattered once more over the field, in castles and cottages, and superstition usurped the throne of philosophy, and suppressed all appearance of individual liberty. A great spiritual monarch appeared to rule over the souls of men in the very same place that had once ruled over their bodies, and a new attempt was made to settle the question of individual rights, by silencing the claimants, and subjecting them to the will of an irresponsible master. All this produced a reaction at last, and the great principle of the Protestant Reformation was the assertion of individual liberty—liberty for the individual to develop himself.

It asserted this right, but it was unable to concede it. The liberty was too great, it immediately developed itself in licentiousness, and the Protestants, who began with the assertion of the rights of the individual, were very soon compelled to acknowledge that the rights of the universal are of equal importance, and that the one cannot be sacrificed for the maintenance of the other.

Here, then, arose a great difficulty—the difficulty of the

Protestant Era—how far the two rights, the rights of the individual man and the rights of the collective man, are compatible with one another. This is the problem that England at present is engaged in solving. Rome despises the problem entirely, denies to the individual a free development, it forbids to think, forbids him to read, forbids him to print, forbids him to preach, forbids him to lecture, forbids him to hold scientific congress. It walls him in, and keeps a sentinel at the gates, without whose special permission he can do nothing. If a new and brilliant idea occurs to him, he must ask permission of the sentinel to take it out with him, if the sentinel refuse, it must be kept at home. If he desires to become acquainted with some new doctrine or some new author distinguished in other lands, he must ask permission of the sentinel to let him read the book that would enlighten, if the sentinel refuse, then he must remain in ignorance. The rights of the universal man are to be preferred to those of the individual. This is Rome, and this is her principle, and therefore she will not allow a Protestant to preach in her exclusive limits, a philosopher to teach without a special license, nor one of her children to read a Bible, and interpret that Bible himself. It must be interpreted by the universal rule, and no individual rule or mode of thinking can be tolerated by Rome.

In England our principles are just the reverse, every man may develop his mind as he pleases. He may send to Rome or to Paris for any book that is there to be bought, and it will be safely transmitted to him, and at home he may read it and invite his friends to read it along with him. This is liberty, but it is not Protestantism, it is merely civil liberty. Protestantism, as a Church, was unable to develop this liberty, it found, when it attempted it, that it destroyed itself. It was tantamount to suicide. The Church of England, like the Church of Rome, has its Articles and Canons, and a man must either abide by them or be false to his church. But he may live in that falsehood and not be punished for it, because the church has lost the power of punishment for breach of certain discipline. This nominal adherence is, however, better than forced adherence, it is this that makes the Catholics of England more true to Catholicism than those of France and Italy. They are voluntary adherents, they can change. They share even in the liberty which they would willingly destroy. All the sects in our land, perhaps,

would destroy this liberty if they could, and would use force to produce unanimity if they were able. But such is the peculiar combination of circumstances in this country, that no party can use force to compel men to think as it does, and thus by what mechanicians call a resolution of force we find a liberty in England for which we have to thank no sect and no party—a liberty that is more liberal than even Englishmen themselves, and which comes direct from the Common Law of the land, to which we are more indebted for our individual rights than to any sect or party whatsoever. Catholics themselves have helped to win this right. Quakers have helped to win it, infidels have helped to win it. All have more or less contributed their share in producing this condition of freedom, which, it would appear, is the real mission of those lands. What seems to be against it will only widen its field of activity the more.

But this free and full development of the individual man is not a complete idea, nor a final purpose. The collective man must be put in harmony with the individual, without this, the individual development is "a universe of dust"—"a fortuitous concourse of atoms." Individual liberty must be compatible with collective unanimity, to suppose otherwise is to suppose a creative imperfection in nature. Now, what will and what will not reconcile individuals with one another? A Catholic law, that is, a universal law, this is the sure and the certain answer to the question. But what is a Catholic law? It is an everlasting law,—written not in statute books, but on the heart of man. Rome calls her law a Catholic law, but it is not written on the heart. England does not call hers a Catholic law, she legislates for individual rights, her very object is imperfection, that of Rome is perfection. It is easier to succeed in imperfection than perfection, and therefore England has succeeded better in developing the individual man than Rome in forming the universal man. Rome has failed, and is daily failing, she aims at perfection, and claims it, and she must claim it, for no law but a perfect law can be Catholic law, any imperfection whatsoever is fatal to its pretensions. England does not fail even when she produces confusion of principles, for her mission is the development of individual rights, and these are necessarily productive of strife. A new Catholic or universal law is indispensable to complete the work of developing individual

liberty. How will that law arise? Whence will it come? What will forerun or foreshadow it? If Rome has not the true Catholic law, she may have the shadow of it, and "coming events cast their shadows before them." A shadow is no mean thing, there is always a substance of some kind behind it, and no mean thing this Catholic law of Rome is in our estimation, nor are we sorry for the aggression that it has made upon England. We never had any fear of it. Rome is too faded, and wrinkled, for us to feel concern for any of her wiles, but if the dark shadow which she has cast upon our land be the adumbration of a Catholic or universal law, whose advent is thus announced, then rejoice, O earth! and all that in thee is! for a day is dawning on thy dark ages, and thy long centuries of anarchy and strife—a happy day that will establish for ever the right of individuals, and render liberty compatible with the perfect peace and security of society.

This is what Rome never can do, and moreover it is what she never even attempted. She objects to liberty as incompatible with law. "The law of liberty" she never even professed to promulgate, the new Catholic law, therefore, is something beyond both Rome and England—a mission superior to that of either. Rome has merely the mission of Catholic law without liberty, which must produce rebellion, England has merely the mission of a law of individual liberty without a Catholic law, and this can never, by any possibility, establish the peace of society. The new law is the Catholic law *with liberty*,—a law which remains in the womb of Providence for the time to come. But such a law must be possible, and must come out, naturally out, of the two old conflicting elements of Romanism and Protestantism, which together hold, but cannot combine, the idea of a perfect system, consisting of a Catholic law of unanimity on the one hand, and a Protestant law of individual liberty on the other.

Such a combination would make the liberty of England pure, and the Catholicism of Rome real, which, at present, neither is.

And now, relative to those introductory remarks, as being considered in the light of *elementary discipline*, and that discipline essential, we cannot regard them as foreign to the work itself, but rather as its very basis, from which may be hoped its final success, and therefore, an indispensable pre-

amble, the aim of which being to prepare for self-guidance as the intended result. We must regard this introduction in an analogical sense, as the outline of the rule of exercises, for us Reformers, in the great work of radical and permanent reform.

As to the "Reform Movement" so called, we really apprehend we feel rather inclined to look at it as a very instructive example for non-imitation.

The official principle implying a tendency towards the rule, if not of one, yet of as few as possible, the principle of constitutionality, on the contrary, implying a tendency towards the rule of many, of *all*. But, unfortunately, we see the Methodist people have lost first the *right*, then the *habit* of self-government. We regret to see this invaluable defence of the church effaced by officials, local, as well as stationed.

Whether "the great movement" for reform may have better instructions in store for us, remains to be seen. We are, however, inclined to question the result. Our doubt is founded on the fact that we see no positive principle laid down for a basis, and, without a basis, no solid building is possible. We see an excited indignation at an existing evil, accompanied with a vague longing for *some* change, *some* remedy, but we see no settled idea of an adequate remedy.

And yet it would strike us that the choice is neither dubious nor definite. Either "self-government" is the remedy, or there is no remedy at all. Therefore, ye Methodist! mind to cherish the principle of self-government. No official almightiness is a compensation for the loss of it.

It is to be regretted that the system of a nominal official government has succeeded so much in absorbing the habit of the people of Methodism governing themselves, that the very idea of "self-government" appears to be strangely obscured, if not entirely lost. With reformers, in general, the idea of self-government is narrowed down to mere connexional affairs, with the idea of partly absolute, partly corrupt communities. Some speak of local abuses, some of favouritism, others of secret diplomacy, the very complaints are fragmentary gushes, a groping in the dark with no light to lead. Few appear aware of the truth, that the evil is the same everywhere—loss of "self-government"—consequently that the remedy is likewise one and the same "revindication of self-government."

This compasses everything from church and circuit affairs to connexional policy. Either self-government everywhere or freedom nowhere, and constitutional life a fiction—that is the alternative.

When the reformers of Methodism will be able to hold up the principle of the people's self-government in full operation, vivified by common sense, and by a patronage which has for its motto—"One is your master, even Christ"—when they will be able to show us, that the church is administered by the church, the people, and not rotten orders of the community, the circuit by the circuit, and the common concerns of the connexion, but only and exclusively these, by the Annual Assembly, when they will be able to show us in every superstructure of these aggregations, the control of connexional affairs in the charge of true representatives of the people, every one of them responsible, because every one of them *revocable*, the delegates alike as the church and circuit officers, if they will be able to show us, church and circuit assemblies regularly organised, and invested with a church polity character, standing orders of the people's will, watching every branch of church administration, and of connexional affairs, when we shall see reform fostered by an active consistent life, possible only with decentralisation, instead of presenting us a continual run for official centralisation, which *must* leave the people ignorant of their own church affairs, *must* generate ecclesiastical indolence, *must* lead to favouritism and corruption, if instead of seeing the despotic tendency of too much governing prevail, we shall see the people managing its own affairs to the utmost possible extent, and leaving to the official government the smallest possible field for action, consequently the smallest possible field for the dispensation of favours and for doing wrong, if we shall see the Annual Assembly restricted to the high field of common connexional concerns, and by this high destiny raised to the dignity and to the self-esteem of the ancient assembly of apostolical times, instead of being a tool in the hands of an irresponsible system for meddling with every small matter and every petty local concern, losing by this habit of transacting small business the resolution of grappling with what is great, and thus reduced by the "system" to what the Wesleyan Conference was reduced by John Wesley, to say the least and best of it, a board of registration for accomplished facts, if in a word the

honourable officials of the great reform movement will be able to show us "self-government," and by self-government the evils inherent to the fragility of every human institution, reduced to a practical minimum, then they may boast reform institutions, and claim the right of competition in the race of "forms of government," until then they must submit to our repeating the words "that the reform attempts at a constitution is a compound of fictions and illusions"—"*He that is* first in his own cause *seemeth* just, but his neighbour cometh, and searcheth him."—Prov. 18-17.

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The following synopsis of Rules and Principles will EMBODY for the consideration of the people called Methodist the writer's opinion on Methodism as it should be, or the constitution of a Christian Church in accordance with the Divine Scriptures.

PRINCIPLE.—The supremacy of the Head and the equality of the members for all ordinances and regulations in the Church of Christ.

"One is your Master, *even* Christ and all ye are brethren" Matt. XXIII. 8.

"If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, *then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the Church; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican."—Matt. XXIII. 15 to 17.

From which it is evident that the Constitutions for government of Methodist Churches are all anti-scriptural, imperfect for the government of a Christian Church, and inconsistent with peaceable union, and equal brotherhood of its members, and therefore none of them be adopted.

It is the duty as well as privilege of each individual of the church to watch over its purity and efficiency, and in earnest, and constantly to remember and be warned by the invasion

of our Christian rights and privileges by usurped authority exercised by officials of the church, who, instead of caring for the flock have been reckless in tearing and scattering it, excommunicating from the Methodist Churches multitudes of the most pious, useful and ornamental members of the church, for no other reason than asserting those rights of which they had been unrighteously *debarred* from the very commencement of Methodism,—rights which had been made over to them by the great Head of the Church in his Will and Testament, and for remonstrating against such Anti-Christian conduct.

Therefore be it resolved—

That the BASIS of a plan for a reformation of existing abuses in Methodism, shall be the principle of the right of interference, on the part of the members of the church, in the regulation of all its affairs.

In the following general Rules for our own government as a Church—equally by all, equally for all—these two leading principles are the foundation: The *equality* of members, and the scriptural injunction binding upon a church the *duty of managing its own affairs.*

1st. FOUNDATION.—As a fundamental principle, we hold and recognise as the only and sufficient rule of faith, and also of church government, the Holy Scriptures, especially the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and regard as matters indifferent, so far as membership with a Christian Church is concerned, whatever is not manifestly enjoined in those infallible records—"All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousuess. That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.—2 Tim. 3, 16, 17. This would imply a large and enlightened use of the written word without any restrictions.

THAT OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.—We concur in those sentiments generally taught in the Theological writings of the late Mr. John Wesley, and which are admitted by the various branches of the Methodist community, as being *consistent* with the Holy Scriptures.

2nd. SCRIPTURE THE TEST OF RULES.—Since no human beings are infallible, and since all history proves that even the church itself is liable to err, by *permitting* mere human judgment to supersede the word of God, the members of each church shall test all their written or printed rules, and all their usages, institutions, regulations, and doctrines, and bring all to the standard of the New Testament.

3rd. OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.—All persons who profess a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and who evince their sincerity by renouncing sin, and yielding obedience to the Divine commands, are eligible to become members of our Church. This being in accordance with our blessed Lord's invitation and declaration, "Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light."—Matt. XI, 28 to 30.

4th. OF CHURCH FELLOWSHIP.—In sacred history, we find a manifest *distinction* between the church and the world "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened, and heard *it*, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between him

that serveth God and him that serveth him not."—Mal. 3. 16 to 18. Here we have words of abundant comfort and encouragement, to which the people of the world are strangers, but they are experienced where there is a true church fellowship. And we find, whatever becomes the privilege of the church, it constitutes its duty—always a beneficial duty—thus, "Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering; (for he *is* faithful that promised) and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."—Heb. X—23 to 25. Again, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."—Heb. III—12 13. Therefore, Christian Fellowship so plainly enjoined by example and precept in the Sacred Scriptures is not to be held as a matter indifferent, but is to be regarded as a divine obligation and privilege to be observed and enjoyed, and the cessation thereof through whatever circumstances as a deprivation and sorrow.

5th. Class Meetings.—Each church shall divide itself into classes, comprising not more than twenty members, meeting weekly, each class shall choose its own leader, either male or female, and change that leader whenever it wishes so to do, subject to the approval of the church meeting. The members are expected to contribute towards the support of the gospel amongst us. One penny per week and one shilling per quarter, cannot be considered unreasonable, except in cases of extreme poverty, but then, their richer brethren should consider it their duty to supply that lack by contributing more largely—hence the exhortation of the Apostle,

"Upon the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."—I Cor.—16, 2. And as that precept, on the present subject, is applicable to all the members, the weekly pence might be dispensed with, if more agreeable, by the quarterly contribution of two shillings and one penny, less or more.

6th. CLASS LEADERS.—One of the members of each class styled the leader, shall be determined by suitable qualifications for that important office. In this is implied, their fidelity to God, and their faithfulness to those who meet with them. Their duty is to "*Feed the flock of God which is among them,*—not *being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.*" In humility, and heavenly mindedness, they are to be *ensamples, types,* to the flock, *moulds* of a heavenly form, into which the spirits and lives of the flock may be *cast,* that they may come out after a perfect pattern. In the execution of the office, there must be a qualification for close inquiry into the state of mind, to see that they be either *true* penitents, or *genuine Christian believers.* Those of their charge who walk in the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the Holy Spirit, should be encouraged to seek the perfect love of God, as earnestly as ever they sought the Divine favour. The privilege of their enjoying it should be set before them in as clear a light as possible, that they might at once go up and possess the land of promise. Who then is sufficient for these things, so that the little flock may become a peculiar people zealous of good works? The *test* must be applied. Does the candidate for the office profess to *experience* these things himself, and if so, can his testimony be received? Great caution should be used, both in the choice and the retention of a leader for a class. He should be a happy witness that the blood of

Christ cleanseth from all sin, and can say to his brethren "Be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ." And no leader should be suffered to remain in office, who has left his first love, and of consequence, his first zeal for God, and regard for souls. Class leaders may be said to hold the most important office in the church. They should be the nursing fathers and nursing mothers in the church,—out of which, the very preachers of the gospel and office-bearers of the church, are to be raised for future generations,—and upon their qualifications and faithfulness, the spiritual condition and usefulness of the members in a great measure depends. Every leader is expected to go before his class in his advances in piety, and to be a special pattern of holiness and zeal to the members of the church. Thus it is written, "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." Witness the good confession made by the Psalmist "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases." *Who healeth all thy diseases.* Spiritual disease is the disease of the soul.—This is cured by sanctification. The Apostle Jude terms this, "the common salvation"—dispute it who will, "their word will eat as doth a canker." The apostle Paul saith "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal. The Lord knoweth them that are his. And let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, *and* prepared unto every good work."

No person shall be appointed a Leader unless he be an *experienced* person in these essentials, viz.:—justification by

faith, and *sanctification* by faith, as a *present* privilege. On that grave subject, should any serious doubt exist, no person shall be appointed for permanency, but might be placed on trial for some three or six months, until the Class and Church Meeting shall be satisfied as to the required qualifications being experienced or not by the candidate for the office,—and then confirmed or rejected accordingly.

Nothing can possibly prevent *formality* from creeping into the classes, if the members be not strongly, affectionately, and constantly urged to expect *a present and a full salvation.*— Something beyond what is now possessed should be always held out to them, as an incentive to them to forget those things which are behind, and to reach forth to those things which are before, which, they should ever remember, are to be received by faith. No public ministrations will be sufficient to maintain the life of religion in individuals, or to preserve the purity of the body, without faithful leaders in the Church.

If the Rule be right, and the preceding notes be just, it will appear to be a matter of very great importance to the Methcdist Connexions, that caution should be used in putting men in this office, and that they ought to be men of sterling piety, of a good natural understanding; and of solid judgment. It will be utterly impossible for them to fill their places properly, without the pure love of God in their hearts, as a sacred fire, inflaming them with holy zeal for his glory and the salvation of souls, nor can they be expected to discharge their duty well any longer than they retain this principle in their own breasts.

It shall be the duty of the leader to receive from the members what they are willing to give towards the support of the gospel among them. It shall also be the province of the leader to furnish the members of his class with quarterly tickets, for their more convenient admission to our religious meetings, but not for a renewal of membership.

7th. MUTUAL DUTIES OF MEMBERS.—It becomes the duty of our members to cultivate a spirit of brotherly affection towards one another, and to manifest this spirit by promoting each other's welfare, preferring each other in business, advising each other in difficulties, and defending each other in character, encouraging to duty, admonishing in error, and restoring when fallen, comforting in distress, visiting in affliction, and assisting in need,—thus shall we bear each other's burdens, and the household of faith will be established. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."—Gal. 6-2.

8th. DUTIES TOWARDS OTHER CHURCHES.—As members of the Militant Church of Christ, our people are called upon to cherish a friendly disposition towards professing Christians of other denominations, especially towards the various branches of the Methodist community, and to evidence the same by a candour of sentiment and liberality of conduct, by giving them the right hand of fellowship, and rendering them the kind offices of brethren, by giving them an interest in their prayers, and rejoicing in their true prosperity.

Such a Church is no other than a company of men having the form, and seeking the power of Godliness, united, in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation.

9th. CHURCH MEETINGS.—Each company of believers regularly assembling in any given place of Public Worship, is the Church of that place. Therefore, the Church Meeting shall consist of the preachers, leaders, stewards, and chapel trustees, being members of that church, together with such other members of the Church as may be disposed to attend. This meeting shall be held weekly, fortnightly, or monthly, as required, and every leader, unless lawfully prevented, shall

regularly attend to pay in his class-money to the Steward, and assist in transacting the business of the Meeting.

The Church Meetings shall have the management of the affairs of their respective churches, subject to the final revision of the Circuit Quarterly Meeting;—in case of an appeal against any of its decisions, all matters to be ordered and determined by a majority of votes, and minutes to be regularly kept.

10th. ADMISSION AND EXPULSION OF MEMBERS.—Each Church shall admit and exclude its own members, and choose and displace its own officers by a Church Meeting.—And once in every year at least, shall solemnly examine, whether the Church has performed its duty as directed in Matt. XVIII—15 to 17. This passage contains "our beacon, our Divine pillar of fire by night, and cloud by day." No private or official member shall be subject to Church Censure, suspension from privilege, or exclusion from the church, without the consent of a majority of a Church Meeting, or of the Quarterly Meeting; any member disatisfied with the decision of any Church meeting, may appeal to the Quarterly Meeting of the Circuit as the highest local authority, whose decision shall be final,—this appeal to the Circuit Quarterly Meeting, is on the principle, that, "In the multitude of counsellers *there is* safety."

11th. CHURCH STEWARDS.—There shall be two Stewards to each Church, one of whom shall act as Treasurer, and the other as Secretary, they shall be appointed or re-appointed immediately after the December Quarterly Meeting. In all cases where other suitable brethren can be found to undertake the office, neither Preachers nor Leaders shall be chosen for the Church Stewards. The Church Stewards shall take charge of all matters and arrangements connected with the comfortable maintenance of Divine Worship, and shall see

that all required Public Notices in Congregations are duly given.

12th. LOCAL PREACHERS.—No Local Preacher shall be put upon the plan, until he has successively passed the Church Meeting to which he belongs, and the Circuit Quarterly Meeting,—thus satisfying them, that he has a *conviction* of Divine call to preach the Gospel, and that it is his *duty publicly* to call sinners to repentance. And that the Church may be satisfied with its Preachers, they shall be regularly examined at the Quarterly Meeting for general business, to inquire whether their Piety, including their Christian *experience* as required for that of a Leader, talents, and doctrinal views, are such as render them fit persons to be received, and continued in the Ministry.

The Local Preachers shall be at liberty to preach at other times and places, besides those on the plan, and for other parties who hold the vital doctrines, and practice the precepts of our common Christianity, provided their appointments on the plan be not neglected. Their glory is, "We seek not your's but you." Nevertheless, Local Preachers may have any pecuniary recompense from the quarterly board that it thinks fit, and the poor and the aged of whom, are entitled to the special consideration of the Churches for their work's sake. The labourer is worthy of reward.

No Local Preacher shall be nominated, and recommended, as a fit and proper person to go out and travel, unless he has passed the Circuit Quarterly Meeting, thus satisfying it, that he has a reasonable *conviction, that it is his duty to devote himself entirely to the work of the Ministry.*

13th. QUARTERLY MEETINGS.-The Circuit Quarterly Meeting shall consist of the Preachers, Leaders, Stewards, and Trustees, being members of the Church, together with all such other members of the Church as may be disposed to attend.

The Quarterly Meeting shall have the management of all the affairs of the Circuit, all matters to be determined by a majority of votes. It shall have the power, quarterly, of appointing *any member* it may think best qualified to fill the office of Chairman to the meeting, and to act as Superintendent to the Circuit for the ensuing quarter, the right of nomination to be with any member, and the votes to be taken by ballot if required. There shall be two Stewards for the management of the temporal affairs of the Circuit, to be chosen or re-elected at the December Quarterly Meeting, one to act as Treasurer, and the other as Secretary, to transact all the money affairs of the Circuit; attend and keep minutes of the Quarterly Meeting, and superintend the temporal matters under its directions. The Quarterly Meeting shall determine the mode of administering the Lord's Supper, that of Baptism, and the holding of Love Feasts; and also shall decide what shall be the duties of the Circuit relative to the District Meeting. For all purposes, when any meeting has been regularly called, or adjourned, those who do attend are competent to perform the business of such meeting. The chairman in all meetings to have only the casting vote. The minutes of the Quarterly Meeting shall be open for inspection of any of its members.

14th.—DELEGATES FOR CONNEXIONAL ASSEMBLY.—The Quarterly Meeting shall have the right of sending as its delegates to the Annual Connexional Assembly, such members as it may freely elect by the ballot, the right of nomination to be with any member. All reasonable expenses of the delegates shall be paid by the Circuit, and besides, whatever other instructions it may think proper to give to its delegates to the Annual Assembly, the following shall always be required. That the delegates shall not exercise discipline, that being the province of the Church, that they shall not

send the Church "an address" but a *report* of their proceedings, and that, the Scriptural experimental test, for all itinerant preachers whom we as a church are at all disposed to receive to labour among us, is, that they shall be required to *testify*, in their own personal experience, to the *doctrine* of *Christian perfection*, as well as prominently to preach, and declare, its attainment by *faith in the atonement of Christ*, as a *present privilege* and *duty*.

That the Circuit not having more than seven hundred members, send *one* delegate to the Annual Assembly, having upwards of seven hundred and not more thrn fourteen hundred, *two*, and upwards of fourteen hundred members, *three*. The June Quarterly Meeting shall appoint delegates to the Annual Assembly, and shall adjourn itself until after the close of the Annual Assembly, to receive the report of the delegates.

15TH. TRAVELLING PREACHERS.—No preacher shall remain a second or third year, but by the desire of a majority of the Quarterly Meeting, the right of request to be with any member, and the votes to be taken by ballot. Every new preacher put down for the Circuit, shall have a copy of the circuit rules, that he may be acquainted with the mode of procedure adopted in the circuit.

In any official document, or public announcement of the church, it is inexpedient that the term "reverend" should be used in connexion with the name of any preacher.

All preachers shall meet in class, and conform to all our discipline, and none shall be excused in this respect, and to be considered members of that church, in which the class where they meet is included.

16th. SPECIAL MEETINGS.—Any special meeting of a Church, shall be called by the Church Secretary, and it shall be his duty to call such special meeting, on a requisition,

signed by any ten members of the church. Any special meeting of the Circuit shall be called by the Circuit Secretary, and it shall be his duty, duly to call such special meeting, on a requisition signed by any thirty members of the church or churches, and being sanctioned by a Church Meeting.

17th. LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE.—Every member shall enjoy, unmolested and inviolate, the right of private judgment, and freedom for full expression of opinion. Any member may originate or introduce a measure at any public meeting of the church or churches, and may take part in any discussion.

18th. INDEPENDENCE OF CIRCUITS.—That every Circuit have the right and power to govern itself by its Local Courts, without the interference of any Connexional Assembly, and shall have the management of its internal affairs.

19th. HOME MISSIONS.—That the Circuit contribute to the support of a Home Mission Fund, by a yearly collection in the classes, to be mentioned by the leaders at the March Quarterly Renewal of Tickets, and the money to be collected by them in the May following. And also by a public July collection.

20th. MARRIAGE OF MEMBERS.—While it shall be the duty of the church to enforce the exhortation of the Apostle, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," &c., see 2 Cor. VI.,—14 to 18,—yet the marriage of members of the Church with Christian persons of any acknowledged church of believers, be not subject of church censure, or expulsion from church membership,—but the attention of the members be steadfastly warned by that apostolic caution.

21st. REVIVALS.—That we approve of, and concur in, the holding of Special Revival Services, and the distinct preaching of the doctrine of Christian Perfection.

22nd ITINERANT MINISTRY.—That we approve of the

Itinerant Ministry, with its definite term of appointment,—that its arrangement be the province of the Delegates to the Annual Assembly of the Connexion, in accordance with the Circuits. And that, such a ministry giving itself "wholly unto prayer and to the word" be entitled to a comfortable maintenance from the church which has its service.

23rd..—MATTERS DISAPPROVED OF IN THE CHURCH.—In the Church we disapprove of Public Bazaars, Public Tea Meetings, Public Testimonials to Preachers, excepting that of a good written character for usefulness, to be required in every new sphere of service in the church. Public, fulsome flattery of individuals, whether highest in the Church, or highest in the State,—and all public mere amusements.

24th. MATTERS ENJOINED AND APPROVED OF IN THE CHURCH.—We approve of due Respect for the Lord's Day,—for sobriety of character, especially from intoxicating drinks,—for reading and thinking more, and talking less,—and for all institutions that have for their object the good of mankind.

25th. WESLEYAN TITLES.—That the appellation Wesleyan as a title of distinction and honour shall be discontinued in connexion with our Methodism, its Members, Chapels, Institutions, Publications, and in every other respect,—excepting Wesley's Theological Works, and his Collection of Hymns. Note.—Had John Wesley been one of the most successful of ministers, and one of the most consistent of men, yet the idea should be rejected, that the church should be called after his name, and we well might have availed ourselves of the assistance of the Apostle Paul, in settling this name question. We hear him addressing the Corinthian Church, "Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I am of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you?"—Thus Paul's jealous indignation against the Paulian's, Apol-

loians, and Cephians. *Is Christ divided?* Can he be split into different sects and parties? Has he different and opposing systems? Or, is the Messiah to appear under different persons? *Was Paul crucified for you?* As the gospel proclaims salvation through the *crucified* only, has Paul poured out his blood as an atonement for you? This is impossible, and therefore you being called by my name is absurd, for his disciples you should be alone, who has bought you by his blood. Again, "I have planted, Appollos watered, but God gave the increase, so then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase."

26th. STATE CHURCH ESTABLISHMENT.—We do protest against having any connexion whatever with the State Church, and that we do hereby declare ourselves to be, in the strictest sense of the term, and to all intents and purposes, *Dissenters.* Hence, no member shall be allowed to hold any office in the Church, who shall be in any way whatever connected with the, so called, Church of England, or shall sanction any relative in obtaining or holding any office or interest in connexion with the said State Church, or shall in any way whatever, either directly or indirectly, voluntary support or uphold the anti-christian system of Church and State, as established by law.

27th. METHODIST CHURCH.—That the appellation Methodist *Church* is now substituted for that of Methodist *Society.*

28th. CHURCH AUTHORITY.—That the Methodist official authority, and its official meetings, as existing heretofore, are now merged into Church authority, and into Church meetings.

29th. CHAIRMAN'S DUTIES.—That a chairman of any meeting refusing to submit any motion duly and legally brought before the meeting, or putting any motion contrary

to rule, shall be displaced forthwith by the meeting, and shall otherwise be amenable to the Church for his conduct in that respect.

30th. METHODIST REFORMATION.—That as the *execution* of the "doom" of the Wesleyan anti-christian system *devolve* upon Reformers, we strenuously pledge ourselves "no supplies, no surrender, no concessions," and no *cessation*, until there shall be a complete victory, "Methodism *as it is*," in its government, be utterly destroyed, the reproach on our Holy religion be for ever swept away,—that it no longer remain, only as a disgraceful history, as a terrible warning to all future generations of the Methodist Churches. "He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What *is* the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord."

31st. METHODISM RE-FORMED.—That as the Methodist People were designed from their commencement to be a Church, a Connexion, as an instrument, a special instrument, in the conversion of the world, and that *design* being frustrated, the people separated, the connexion broken, and consequently made less useful to each other, and to the world at large. It shall now become our province to establish that primitive design, by the means of a purely Scriptural system of church government, as having *one faith*. "Having renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God,"—by an open, explicit acknowledgment of what we know to be the *truth*,—concealing nothing, blunting the edge of no truth, explaining spiritual things, not in the words of man's wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit of God. Speaking so that every man's conscience shall bear testimony that we proclaim the truth of God. This being characteristic of divine truth, even every

man's *conscience* will acknowledge it, though it speak decidedly against his own practice. Thus should we speak in the sight of God, whose eye is ever on the heart and conscience of man, and who always bears testimony to his own word.—Our particular object shall be, unity and concord with our Methodist brethren, all the world over, for the purpose of *utility*. Unity being strength, to become a strong body for usefulness is our ultimate object. Let us manifest it by openness and candour, distinct from a false delicacy. Let us say to our scattered brethren, "come let us reason together,' let us unite for the speedy conversion of the world. For that' great object may we come to see eye to eye, feel heart to heart, and act hand and heart together. May we open our hearts to each other, point out errors to be corrected, truths to be acknowledged, embodied, and recommended as the rule of faith and practice: And if the truth shall make us free and united, we shall be free indeed—free to love each other as brethren, free to co-operate as fellow labourers in the vineyard of our common Lord.

We disguise it not, our object shall be to proselyte to Scriptural Methodism at home and abroad, as the best medium of *getting* the *most good*, and of *doing* the *most good*. this is the system for us to support, and to support it to the utmost, Methodism as it should be. What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder, or *keep asunder*. We rest not with any partition medium standing between us and our universal brethren—it is anti-christian—it is jewish. "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd." Therefore, Divide and be conquered! Unite and conquer!! Hence, we no longer *agree* to differ, but that we *only agree* to *agree* as a People, and that anything and everything contrary to that spirit have our unqualified regret,

acknowledging to no distinction, but that of *superior* degrees of holiness and *usefulness*, acknowledging it to be our duty and privilege, to honour such highly for their *work's sake*, yet not for their name, or offices' sake, as there may be name and office, without holiness or usefulness. We " should earnestly contend for that which was once delivered unto the saints."

32nd. FOREIGN MISSIONS.—That our delegates to the Connexional Annual Assembly, shall be instructed to represent to the Assembly, our views and desires relative to our connexional duty towards the organization, and support of the means of sending the Gospel to the *Heathen*. That having lost all confidence in the present race of Wesleyan Missionaries, that duty now devolves upon us Reformers, to send efficient Ministers, as our messengers, with the word of life and salvation to our perishing fellow sinners. And furthermore, that the people's money now going into a channel, and into the hands of men in whom we have lost *all* confidence, it now becomes our serious and immediate duty, to form new and safe means, in order to prevent that portion of the " supplies" from runing to *worse* than " *waste*" in the present doomed channel, that money, at least in part—and how great a part, who can tell ?—being applied to the partial support of the chief feeders of that corruption which has been the bane of the usefulness of our Methodism both at home and abroad, and the lengthening out of that doomed existence, which, for the peace and happiness of the Church, and for the spiritual benfit of the world at large, should be brought to the most speedy termination possible. In order that that corrupt channel be most speedly shut up, we would urgently recommend that the delegates to the assembly do commence this noble and necessary work without hesitation or delay, being assured, in our own minds, that they would have a

ready and generous response from a People prepared of the Lord. At the same time, assuring ourselves that talents could be commanded equal to the work of the advocacy required. The immediate funds thus raised, to be reserved and ready at hand against a providental opening, and suitable men of God raised up for that special purpose.

As a reform Church, We question not the talent, and the *early* piety of the present Missionaries—from our hearts we pity them, on account of their falling into such a pestilential atmosphere of utter corruption as " Methodism as it is," with which, they have become identified, they being identically one with their brethren, and system at home. To supply that lack of true service, we must awake, arise, be up and doing—woe be unto us if we send not the Gospel to the perishing Heathen—hence, necessity is laid upon us—and that glory must not depart from us as a People. And thus minding God's cause and interest in the world, He will be sure to manage ours, especially in the Church.

The Foreign Mission shall be kept entirely separate and distinct from the Home Mission.

The Church may not understand what God is about doing on a large scale—we should *Aim High*. It has been well remarked that men are often capable of greater things than they perform. They are sent into the world with bills of credit—and seldom draw to their full extent—however, we in the Church, should have faith in God, ours should be a *living active* faith, and then, we shall indeed find our account in it.—" How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace ; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation ; that saith unto Zion. Thy God reigneth ! Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice ; with the voice together shall they sing ; for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion." Isa. LII.—7-8.

33rd. ALTERATION OF RULES.—No alteration in rules may be made, or any new rule passed, but at a Quarterly Meeting, such alterations, or new rules, to be confirmed at the following Quarterly Meeting, or they shall be null and void.

34th. ATTESTATION.—These are the General Rules of our Church, all of which we are taught of God to observe, even in his written word, the only Rule, and the sufficient Rule both of our Faith and Practice—the which being capable of proof, and illustrations—for inasmuch as it is written, "upon all the glory *shall be* a defence," that that defence, is invested with a Scripturally constituted Church, therefore, instrumentally, the defence shall rest with the Church itself, without partiality, without restriction, and without exception —with perfect equality it shall defend the truth, and the right, in the management of all its affairs. Acknowledging and thus declaring, that, "*One is our Master even Christ*, and, that *all we are brethren.*" Hence—"Not unto us O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, *and* for thy truth's sake."

But let us remember, also, that though the Gospel be an infallible revelation, we are but fallible interpreters, when we determine the sense even of some important propositions written there; and therefore, though we seem to be established in the belief of any particular sense of Scripture, and though there may be just calls of Providence to profess and subscribe it, yet there is no need that we should resolve or promise, subscibe or swear, never to change our mind, since it is possible, in the nature and course of things, we may meet with such a solid and substantial obligation as may give us a quite different view of things from what we once imagined, and may lay before us sufficient evidence of the contrary. We may happen to find a fairer light cast over the same Scriptures, and see reason to alter the sentiments even in

some point of moment. "So I believe, and so I will believe," is the prison of the soul for lifetime. To impose such profession on other men in matters not absolutely necessary, and not absolutely certain, is a criminal usurpation and tyranny over faith and conscience, and which none has power to require but an infallible dictator. Remember always that a writer best interprets himself; and as we believe the Holy Spirit to be the supreme agent in the writings of the Old Testament and the New, he can best explain himself. Hence the theological rule arises, that Scripture is the best interpreter of Scripture.

These form the Constitution of the Methodist Churches, united in this Circuit, deliberately conside.ed and adopted and solemnly confirmed by the Quarterly Meeting, and witnessed and attested by the appointed officers.

No community can be said, without mockery, to have a constitution, where there is a consolidation of the different powers of government in the hands of the same men, and the remaining portion are left, of course, without any security for their rights. Such a case presents an absolute government —a government of men, not principles. A constitution is not the creature of government; the nature of things renders it impossible that it should be an act of government. In strict propriety, it exists anterior to government. Government is based upon, proceeds from, and is the creature of, the constitution. A constitution contains the elements and the principles of government, and fixes the nature and limits of its form and operations; but it is an instrument distinct from government, and by it government is controlled. It is a preliminary act of the people in the creation of government. It sustains to government the same relation that laws do to the judiciary: the latter is not the source of law, cannot make laws or annul them, but is subject to, and governed by law.

A constitution recognises the rights of the people, and provides for their assertion and maintenance. It fixes the landmarks of legislation. It is the sovereign voice of the people, giving law and limit to themselves and their representatives.

Law is merely the rule that keeps liberty in order. Liberty is mischievous without it. The people of Methodism talk too little about law, and too much about liberty, they are one-sided, they are vociferating about glorious liberty. Glorious law is a thing that is hitherto unheard of. Hence the chaos of church affairs. It is only the type of church principles—the counterpart of Methodist vague phraseology. What else can be expectod from men who glory in undefined liberty than an undefined system? We have all sorts of perplexities, dilemmas, quibbles, questions, doubts, and disputed points, as if the whole system were invented by lawyers for the purpose of keeping themselves and their families flourishing like the green bay trees, for all generations. Ours is a young reform church, and young natures are all unbridled, and difficult to manage until they be trained. In other words, young natures are free, but when they come under training they are under law, and all the better for it. A horse with full liberty is an unruly horse, a well-trained horse is the best of the two. Law is training—liberty is not. There is a good and bad liberty. The bad liberty entitles you to do as you please, good or evil. The good liberty entitles you to do as much good as you please, but no harm. This is the proper distinction, and unless this distinction be made, we know not whether the liberty a man prates about be a good or a bad thing. Law determines it, and there is no other mode of determining whether liberty be good or bad except by the law that regulates it, for without a law to regulate it we know nothing more monstrous than liberty, more immoral, more base and disgusting. You can attach no definite meaning to the word liberty until you have defined it by law.

Give us then law—strong law and just law. The stronger a law is the better. It is just like a man, his merit lies in his strength, his bodily or mental vigour, his decision of character. Relax that, and he loses value. Both are good, law and liberty. Unite them, check the one by the other, test and define the one by the other. If one becomes loose, bridle and restrain it, if one becomes harsh and cruel, refine and polish it. But let law always hold the reins of government, liberty never. There is no principle of government in liberty. It is the individual nature independent of government. Law is the social and collective nature from which proceeds all order in human society. To the perfection of this the genius of man should ever be directed, and the perfection of law is identical with the perfection of liberty. The most perfect law and the most perfect liberty are compatible, but one refers to the collective body, and the other to the individual alone. We talk too one-sidedly, and think too one-sidely when we advocate the cause of either alone, for they are inseparable and co-relative principles, which mutually receive their perfection from each other. We know not which is worst in excess. Where there is law there is order, and that is more than you can say of liberty. But liberty is a blessed thing, without which even order is tyranny.

This portion, on the *Constitution*, is concluded with an anecdote.—"A judge, known as Judge Willy, was once presiding, when a great bully, named Thompson, attempted to intimidate him. Thompson, having succeeded in packing a jury, to suit his purposes, turned his attention to the court, and remarked, "If your honour pleases, here is the law which governs this case,' at the same time drawing a bowie knife of unusual size, and laying it across an open book before him, 'Forewarned, forearmed,' was Judge Willy; and drawing from beneath his hunting-shirt, not a *Colt* but a

Horse pistol, he very calmly rejoined :—'This, sir, is the constitution, and is paramount to the law.' Mr. Thompson acquiesced in the judgment of the court, and the case proceeded without any further interruption."

Present moral, which the "LONGEST RANGE"? The official's *law* of "declaration of principles," or the peoples' *Scriptural Constitution!*

Brethren, you have now laid before you the preliminary remarks, together with the Declarable Rules· You may now expect some further remarks and information on the subject of Reform as a whole, as occasion may require.

In calling to recollection the preliminaries you will have perceived that the " Private Members Discussion Society" has been made *prominent*, standing out beyond the other parts. And it is anxiously required that it be kept so throughout. We *write* for the private members *discussion*, and are most anxious that you *read* for the *same purpose*. Officials generally, can only write for officials. While dwelling on the subject itself, we should not allow ourselves to be diverted by anything foreign to its object and end, " Methodism as it should be," its connecting details should be treated with a corresponding consistency.

Amalgamation with the different branches of the Methodist people is not to be regarded as foreign from the subject of " Methodism as it should be," which demands a corresponding consistency, with, " one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren." That consistency in " Methodism as it is" never existed, the original design of a connexion was frustrated from its very commencement, the union never completed, the system being radically wrong, so much so, that the officials never were amalgamated with their own people. Consequently, the unavoidable cause of separation, division, and subdivisions without termination, producing the necessity for a *legitimate* amalgamation. So that amalgamation commends itself as both *laudible* and a legitimate duty.

To the subject of amalgamation your serious attention is now drawn. The amalgamation now engaging attention amongst different portions of the broken body of the Methodist people. That now particularly referred to is that which is in negociation between the " Wesleyan Reformers" and the " Wesleyan Association."

On this portion of the subject we have considered it an especial duty to dwell as thoroughly as the subject requires, under the conviction that, if it is not for *good*, it may and must be a serious *evil*. And after due consideration, have

been forced into the conviction that *evil* and *not* good must and will inevitably be the result of such amalgamation, so far as the reform is concerned.

This plausible amalgamation affair brings to mind the proverb, "*He that is* first in his own cause *seemeth* just, but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him." This amalgamation originating with the Wesleyan official reformers, it might have been laudable, it might have been otherwise—nothing should be decided hastily, although a strong opinion is entertained respecting it. At the time it commenced its movement with the Delegates in 1854, we stood in doubt of it, knowing at the time that the official reformers had not amalgamated themselves with their own church members, neither was there any fair prospect of their doing so, notwithstanding the expectation which had arisen from time to time on the subject of church organisation. And, moreover, of the long talked of organisation being there and then coupled with the amalgamation movement, causing a diversion from the former to the latter. However, the work was formidably commenced by the appointment of a special committee for the carrying out of the proposed object; at least the amalgamation portion of it, that very plausible part of its duty, represented in the most favourable terms, and, therefore, worthy of its best attention and greatest exertion. In accordance with which, communications were promptly made to the official authorities of different sections of the Methodist people, resulting in negociations with the Wesleyan Association for connexional amalgamation. Amalgamation implying incorporating so as to become one; as such the reformers must be understood to identify themselves with the Association. In confirmation of which, the following are the very words of one of the members of the said special committee. "The adoption of a creed was the work of a few minutes. To be sure, it was the creed of the association, adopted verbatim."

Brethren of the Private Members' Discussion Society, whose proper "neighbourly office is *searcher*," an inquirer, examiner, one who seeks after anything hid or unknown. It now becomes your duty to exercise your office relative to this amalgamation affair. We are coming after the said official parties in order to search them, that it may be ascertained if their profession, as reformers, is just, honest, accurate, or agreeable to the standard of justice: the virtue whereby we give every one

their due, inflict punishment on those who deserve it, and acquit the innocent after a fair trial; so it would appear that your province is rather "formidable"—a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well.

Your attention is now called to this deciding point. Is the Wesleyan Association what it professes to be, a reformed community? For it must entirely depend on this, whether or not *you*, as reformers, *can* amalgamate with it.

Then, is the church polity of the Association, as a *whole*, a reformed system? For it must be understood that it may be composed of complete reform in one essential part, and complete despotism in another essential part, counteracting and destroying it as a *whole*. For instance, after due examination it may be found that, what may be regarded as the connexional portion of the system might be passably correct, and at the same time the local portion of it rotten to the core.

In well and truly trying the Association's adopted and practical system, we need not, exclusively, bring forward the "declarable rules for Methodism as it should be," nor even the Scriptural law, which is the boast in every one's mouth, but prominently the declared law as laid down by the association itself, viz.:—"*Resolved*, That the basis of a plan for a reformation of existing abuses in Methodism shall be the principle of the right of interference, on the part of the members of the church, in the regulation of all its affairs." *Report of the provisional meeting of Delegates in* 1835.

Now, more than twenty long years have passed away since that "resolve," but has that *declaration of principles* ever been organised for practical purpose? Were they so produced, by those select persons out of the body forming a "deputation" to meet the reform "deputation," for the purpose of treating for amalgamation of the two sections of the Methodist people? The official Reformers had also their "declarations of principles" which the amalgamation was to be based on,—true, a document framed at Exeter Hall and ratified by the Delegate meeting at Sheffield, 1853. But those principles they had not organised; they had no general platform for the proposed amalgamation. However, let the very limited period of some five or six years to produce something like a basis be their excuse, *i.e.*, with the people's soft indulgence. But if the Association had none such worth producing, its deputation may have preferred *not* to moot it. Therefore, it would

appear that the two treating deputations were somewhat alike in a fix, but without the least alarm, to them not the slightest consequence relative to *local* church government, at least any thing further than the officials themselves were being personally concerned. But, then, why were the treating officials so intensely concerned relative to a *connexional constitution*? Why such a lawyer-like exhibition, and so praised and boasted of, while the *one* ought to be *done* and the *other* not left *undone*? Why? For the plainest of all reasons on their part—that being the official factotum of reform, which was all they had ever contended for, that the stationed officials should be brought down to the *level* of the local officials, or that the local officials should be raised up to the *standard* of stationed officials. Therefore, the Association joint officials, having obtained their only object, stepped into the *position* of the stationed despots, in opposition to the rights and liberties of the people. And, therefore, being prepared to maintain that position, they met the reform joint officials to treat for an amalgamation on the same despotic principles. The Association, in fact, acknowledge no other reform. They have no *taste* for reform but in *profession*. To serve their own selfish ambitious ends, they are practically bitter enemies to reform for the church as a whole. They would be lords and masters over the people, with the flaming profession of reform on their lips; hence proving themselves a hundred-fold more reprehensible, despicable, and dangerous than the poor doomed Wesleyan Conference itself, dispute it who may. By possibility, it might not be disputed but that John Wesley's doomed despotic system might deserve a feeling, mixed with pity, while we contend that the Wesleyan Association is to be held up to the utmost distrust, as an example to be spurned and shunned! Not on account of their "question by penalty" affair, that being but little concern of the people if they had expelled each other until there was not a despot of them left. But as it was in the beginning, so it is now; pride, pride of office, acknowledging no bounds to their petty vanity. "It is enough for such men as *us* to say so and so." But the people's professed servants must be taught better behaviour. They must be either *mended* or *ended*, as well as the Wesleyan Conference. This *shall* be *our* "plan of pacification." Woe to those officials who continue to worse than trifle with the Church of Jesus Christ. In time past, the people, repre-

hensibly, suffered themselves to be trifled with by "plans of pacification" not fit to offer to children. But those silly and sickening days, it is to be hoped and trusted, are past, not to be repeated, unless by the *criminal stupidity* or *neglect* of the people themselves, they be permitted.

To come more to the point under immediate consideration. Has the practical system of the Wesleyan Association been in accordance with its high, correct, and reasonably satisfactory declaration of principle, which has been already quoted? Anything but that. That declaration and profession has been violated, made null and void by *law* and practice, outraged. Our business is not to call names; but such professed reformers should have been consistent, they should not be suspected; in their practical movements as reformers they should have been above all suspicion—but facts must decide whether they have been sincere, or whether the hypocrite has been played. Between these two terms there is a great gulf fixed, so that there is no passing from one to the other, *sincerity* or *hypocrisy*.

But, *facts* or no charge, *facts* or no case. You shall have now what may be regarded as a fair sample, a specimen of the whole, selected from one circuit, in connection with its boasted Annual Assembly—a true story will tell itself:—

CIRCUIT AFFAIRS OF THE WESLEYAN ASSOCIATION.—From the commencement of its career for reform there was a decided and strong struggle between the people and the joint officials; the people contending for the practical use of the Delegates, declaration of principles, and the officials, as a body, strenuously opposing it at every step, contending that the officials, and they alone, should govern in the separate churches and all circuit matters, consequently *constituting* a *connexion* of *officials*. But the people not being quite so teachable and manageable as their officials could desire, an obstinate conflict commenced resulting in the officials being forced to give way, after the people had been arrayed against them for their own rights; but only step by step would they yield as they were pressed by the united voice of the people. It is well recollected the first step gained. Out of about 1700 members in the circuit, some half-a-dozen of the private members were voted into the circuit quarterly meeting at a special general meeting; rather *modest* "interference" to commence with, certainly; but the people were *novices*

at that day or they would have spurned such a *concession* on the ground of equality. Six private members only to compete against four-score officials! But, alas! what were they among so many? They were just nothing at all, for the officials would have all their own way, right or wrong. Notwithstanding, the officials would keep up the *sham* of making their final appeal to the people, settling everything themselves beforehand, like unto the "laws which altereth not;" yet would they come at a meeting of church members to give an account of their stewardship, forsooth, to have their proceedings examined, confirmed, or otherwise, as it might seem to please the people, but all that pretention was felt to be nothing but insolent mockery. This brings to recollection one particular instance of the sort, when his Reverence . . . . . (*alias* the Association *deputy* to the "amalgamation") was chairman, he was asked by a private member why matters were then and there brought forward to be confirmed when they had not only been settled previously, at the quarterly meeting, but subsequently had been put in force and executed, pointing out one particular case, which he did not attempt to deny, but had the insolence to reply, "how do you know?" There are many glaring facts to be produced against this Mr. *Deputy* and Company, which shall come all in due order. Who would not hail the amalgamation composed of such deputations? The people were at that time powerless; but pushing in the thin edge of the wedge, courage was mustered to intimate to their lordships that an appeal would be made to the people at large. The appeal was accordingly made to the people; who then were found to be content with nothing short of the bill of rights which had been held out to them—"the bill, the whole bill, and nothing but the bill," and it was done, the circuit quarterly meeting opened to the whole of the members without distinction or restriction. Thus was the quarterly meeting lawfully composed, in spite of the joint officials, notwithstanding their rage and fury, and comparing the people to "Balaam's asses" when shamming could no longer screen them. But O! how changed the scene in opening the new quarterly meeting. The people did more than make their appearance, they dared to speak and take part in its business. Then commenced a regular war indoors. O, our God! and are we now forced to "tell *it* in Gath, to publish *it* in the streets of Askelon." Although the quarterly

meeting was then open to all the members yet but comparatively few of the private members attended, perhaps there were about an equal number of officials and non-officials; but then the officials kept their vantage ground, they could talk the faster, and were more accustomed to intrigue. But the private members had to struggle against the opposition as best they could, until those precious reform officials adopted a scheme to shut the people's mouths whenever any of them pressed anything which was not quite to official *taste*. Hence their *resolve* that what so and so is advancing, being frivolous, be not allowed to proceed, moved, seconded and carried, in the face of their noble law, "the right of interference on the part of the members of the Church in the management of all its affairs." And is this the "Association" with which reformers are now called upon to amalgamate? Yet this was but the commencement of its misdeeds. Trust such men of such a system with our *holy* doctrines. When you know all, you will say *never!*

Despotism is to rule without law. Therefore the Wesleyan Association put off, and staved off, rules for the government of the church, to them the evil day, until after the lapse of some years, when the people could be put off no longer. At length a committee was appointed to consider of, and arrange, some rules for the circuit. His Reverence . . . . with other members, as chosen by the quarterly meeting, formed the committee. At the expiration of some months, the committee met together; they talked together for some time, amounting to nothing. After having conceived together for some time and brought forth actually nothing, not one of the officials having written a word on the subject to produce to the meeting, they were about to adjourn when one of the committee, a private member, expressed his surprise that nothing had been prepared, notwithstanding years had passed since the rules had been called for, and that months had passed since the committee had been appointed for that very purpose. What would become of ourselves, our families, and our world, if secular matters were transacted like unto such affairs of the church? But that private member, saying he did not like to intrude himself on the notice of the elders until they had fully expressed their own opinion on the subject, said, as one of the committee, he had thought on the subject, that he had committed his thoughts to writing, and that he had that writ-

ing in his pocket, "here, here." But there was evidently some alarm awakened; hence "I have to go out of town to-morrow morning," "It is too late to read them now," &c. Therefore they adjourned for a fortnight, perhaps in order that they might sleep over the surprise, or rest and cogitate over it, the dread evil, they must not be taken unawares.

Adjourned meeting—declarable rules read—remarks on them.—An official did not like anything connected with rules to appear disrespectful to the conference folk. The Chairman, his Reverence . . . had a very strong objection to one portion of those rules, he manifesting it by standing up, making a speech, and contending strongly against its adoption. The rule ran thus:—"That the Scriptural *experimental tests* for all itinerant preachers whom *we*, as a society, are disposed to receive to labour among us is, that they will be required *to testify, in their own personal experience, to the doctrine of* CHRISTIAN PERFECTION, *as well as prominently to preach and declare its attainment by faith in the atonement of Christ, as a present privilege and duty.*" That rule must have touched him on a very sore place; he continued to protest against it, exclaiming, "Here is a rule made that sin shall be extinct in me." Those were his own words, the present writer heard him with his own ears, there and then. A deputy in our amalgamation! A master in our Methodist Israel, and know not these things! You must suppose that a few such masters would be no great acquisition to us reformers, what think ye? But that very man was one of the reverend deputies from the Wesleyan Association to the Wesleyan Reformers on the grave subject of amalgamation.

Now what think ye of those matters of *fact?* But you must know a great deal more yet of the Association deputies and its system. Of the rules, another official, not liking to stir disagreeables, and being a little more fox-like on his guard, than his brother officials, who may not be wise at all hours, very coolly put his extinguisher on the whole of them at once by, "these rules are what our people do not want." This modest assertion brings to recollection the saying of the arrogant autocrat—"I am the people." Yet this was the very man who figured away as a representative to the Wesleyan Reform delegate meeting in 1852. "These rules are what our people do not want," over again. If the Wesleyan Reform were composed of such materials as to be complete heroes for reform

in connexional government, and at the same time the most contemptible and consummate despots in church government, we should loath the very name of it. Let such "associate themselves, and they shall be broken in pieces; let such take counsel together and it shall come to nought; speak the word and it shall not stand; for God is with us." But to pass on; the rules in committee were rejected in *toto.*

The quarterly meeting being open to the people, there remained an opportunity to bring the rules forward to be discussed there. Accordingly they were brought forward in sections, moved, seconded, and discussed; some were passed, some were not; but continuing the discussion on them the officials came to the end of their good tempers, became desperate and in their frenzy were urged to put their extinguisher on the rules then in discussion in a legal meeting, free for every member, every member having an acknowledged *right* of interference, which no majority could *lawfully* affect. But without any regard to *right* or *law,* the officials taking advantage of the smallness of the numbers of the private members, and of their infantile state in church affairs, the officials succeeded in moving a resolution "that the discussion of the rules being frivolous and vexatious, be no further proceeded with." The Chairman had no right to put such a motion; but, being seconded, it was put and carried, of which the present writer was a personal witness. Is not this history an increasing and encouraging prospect to hasten the desirable union by "amalgamation." But the people themselves did not remain over tractable and manageable with the official despots' extinguisher on the rules for discussion. They soon made up their minds that if they were to be so rudely treated as not to be heard within, in a legal meeting, they would be heard without, out of the reach of all official despots, hence the *birth* of the "Private Members' Discussion Society." But of official operations. As the rules could be put off no longer the officials proceeded in committee to *manufacture* some in accordance with their own wisdom and *taste* for "our dear people," commencing said rules a century behind the times, from John Wesley, relative to what transpired in Methodism in 1739, as something apropos to Methodist reform, four-fifths of it from the old school. But not to dwell on its precious contents, it is well known what was omitted, 1st, "Anything that might be considered as very displeasing to the Old Con-

ference;" 2ndly, "Anything that might sorely displease his Reverence . . . . especially that *sin* should be *extinct in him* and his coadjutors, without molestation, hinderance, or restriction;" and, 3rdly, "Anything that our people did not want, viz., the declarable rules for Methodism as it should be." All those being carefully omitted, we will acquaint you of a motion of his Reverence, viz., that it should become the rule for the Wesleyan Association people, "That the private members should *not* have or hold any private Discussion Society," to which the present writer was personal witness. One of the brethern, of course a private member, replied, "That such meetings might be necessary to keep such gentlemen as himself in order." And the local officials not having the face to back his Reverence, he failed in this his attempt to enact "Let no man, nor number of men, in our society, write letters, call meetings, do, or attempt to do, anything new, until it has first had the sanction of the *Leaders' meeting.*" Those rules, being cut and dried at last for "our dear people," were brought forward in quarterly meeting and adopted. But lo, and behold! the Wesleyan Association officials, like Wesleyan Conference officials, cannot only make what laws they like, but alter and violate them at pleasure. At the very meeting that those rules became law to the circuit, and which had to be adjourned for a special purpose, those *rules* were *altered*, perhaps not one half of the meeting itself being present; though if all had been present at the adjourned meeting it was not legally in its power there and then to have altered what had been passed and settled at the regular meeting. But, mark! Before those alterations had actually passed at the adjourned meeting, such proceeding was protested against as illegal; and his Reverence, the chairman, was plainly told that if he allowed the *alterations* to *pass* that *he* should be held responsible for it; but "*he* supposed that his friends would hold him harmless." The right or the wrong of the case not making any part of his creed, he dared to pass them. Pass them he did, therefore he *shall* be held responsible. And, pray, is not this Reverend *deputy* and his coadjutors most hopeful and promising acquisitions for the reformers? But you do not know all yet.

Some of the members, being aware that any alteration of rules could legally be made at the ensuing quarterly meeting, made arrangements for some important change in the rules.

The quarterly meeting was fixed in the regular way for the 28th June, 1838, which, being the coronation day, became a general holiday, and it was thought favourable, in order to have as many of the members present as possible, and in order to secure a good attendance, some small notes were printed and distributed to the members for that purpose. But lo, and behold! the officials took the alarm; "but what had honest men to fear." Some of those little papers were taken to a so called "Leaders' meeting," and there discussed, of course with closed doors, by the very men so much afraid of private discussion anywhere else. And the result of their discussion on this little innocent affair was, *now mark well*, that the Leaders' meeting had the *outrageous impudence* to move, second, and carry a resolution "That the quarterly meeting be postponed," and for no other purpose but to keep the private members out of that meeting; the officials, without doubt, fearing that that favourable opportunity might be the cause of swamping some of their despotic schemes, and mark, all this with his Reverence . . . . at the head leading on. But lo, and behold! those precious joint reform officials were foiled; for it turned out that "our dear people" were not quite so silly as they were taken to be. They knew well that a "Leaders' meeting" had no authority or control over the "quarterly meeting." Therefore, that quarterly meeting was duly held by the private members; its business regularly performed; the officials were censured for their non-attendance; delegates appointed for the Annual Assembly, and other important business. But the business of that meeting, which was regarded of the greatest importance, was relative to the rules for the church. The then existing rules were first in order considered, and dealt with; hence resolved, "That the present existing rules of the Wesleyan Methodist Association for the ——— Circuit, being considered insufficient for good and peaceable government, be now null and void," moved, seconded, and carried without opposition. Resolved, "That the rules now regularly brought forward, read, and *duly discussed* and considered, be adopted, and printed for the Wesleyan Methodist Association for the ——— Circuit," moved, seconded, and carried *unanimously!* Minutes of the meeting being signed by the Chairman and Secretary, the meeting dissolved, with no "ordinary feelings of satisfaction," arising not only from the importance of the business

transacted, but from the "manner and spirit" in which it was conducted with "*brotherly candour* and *courtesy !*"

But where were the officials whilst that blessed work of destruction was so effectually being accomplished against the polity of despotism? They were not necessarily excluded from the quarterly meeting; they had freely excluded themselves by their own gross delusions; the pit which they had digged for the people they fell into themselves; the postponment by the officials was for the purpose of keeping the members out of the *only* regular legitimate meeting for church business, so favourable to important affairs then engaging attention. But, while the joint officials were sporting with their own deceptions, sudden destruction came upon their system—a system of sham, snare, and delusion. Loyalty, and fussy respect for royalty, being the scape-goat, they might have been found amusing themselves with the passing scenes of the occasion; they might not have been conspiciously the foremost in all the cavalcades of the day, or boat-racing, &c., they might have been snugly toasting her Majesty's good health—"God bless her." It should not be wondered at if the officials with some of "our principal friends" had some select private amusements, and among others the "postponment" might have been brought on the carpet. "How very cleverly, and yet most effectually, it was done; yes, and the postponed meeting being fixed at a time when, perhaps, not one in twenty of the private members could attend: and thus enjoying themselves prospectively with the nakedness of reform prospects in the power of those "feeble ones" *doomed* by our noble selves, to be kept in the back-ground.

The postponed meeting was accordingly held; but how changed matters then stood. The accusing spirit again made its appearance in the midst of the assembly of the false brethren, to expose the outrage of their policy against common honesty and all order—and exposed they were before many of their assembled dupes, the ignorant unsuspecting people; that exposure with its immediate crushing effect may not be forgotten easily. It was indeed some recompense for *uncommon* suffering in the cause of truth, to witness the power of that truth over those who had so grossly violated it, by honest manly home thrust of *facts* confounding a large circuit of officials and their adherents; yes, by facts alone, for that being an illegal assembly it could be dealt with in no other way, but

declaration and solemn protest; their own *law* condemned them, that was the *fact*, which had only to be stated, leaving their postponment powerless relative to the regularly appointed quarterly meeting which had been duly held; the minutes of that meeting were there and then read, in their hearing, just by way of driving home the nail already firmly fixed; and cruel was the effect of the last stroke of the hammer, viz:—That the new rules which had been unanimously passed at the genuine quarterly meeting were then *actually* at the *printer's!* Those who were present saw the effect, but, the officials evidently *felt it*, body and soul evidently *crushed*, wrung from them bitter exclamations, frenzied taunts and threats, and beseeching entreaties—all of them in their extremity manifesting it to be "a serious matter." The officials were then left in their spurious meeting to beat the air together, with the winding-up consolation that we were not to be frightened or intimidated by anything which they could say or do. Ah! they must have felt the *fact* that they were justly set at defiance, and that before God and the people!

But was that the climax of their misrule, or did they repent? Neither the *one* or the *other*. Traitors have not always a ready repentance *granted* them, but are permitted to go from bad to worse, some times madness takes place before destruction, hence, witness the consummate misrule against *all law* in the Wesleyan Association in the following fact:—

To the Editor of the Christian Advocate.

SIR,—I shall feel obliged by your inserting, in your next number, the following matter of fact.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Sept. 12, 1838. (Signed) ————————

"*Illegal Expulsion*—has also commenced with the Wesleyan Association in . . . . On Sunday, the 2nd instant, a member received his quarterly society ticket, and on the Thursday following he was expelled from the society by a Leaders' meeting, *without notice, without charge, and without trial*, without precedent, consequently his Leader sent in his resignation on Thursday last, and many others are most seriously demurring against it. The whole society is in a fearful state of agitation, the consequence of which time only can develope. His Reverence . . . . in the chair."

"I do hereby testify that the above is correct, the member therein alluded to being one of my own class.

(Signed) ———————

Leader and Local Preacher."

The present writer was present at the signature of the above verification. What need have we of further proof, or of comment on this affair, unless it be to insult your common sense. But should you be fanciful to discover a sufficient sentence for such crimes, by such hands, could you not yourselves easily draw a comparison between such conduct and that of the poor doomed Conference; and see if the Association is not a hundred-fold worse than anything within your knowledge of the despotic conference who maketh no *profession* of *reform*; the conference professes to make laws for the people, it professes to break the laws whenever it may suit its good pleasure to do so, its members make their boast that they can expel a member for "tying his shoe the wrong way," they profess to be the factotum of Methodism, except—that of *reform*. Therefore, from them we have some chance of escape, much the same as that we might have some chance of escape from a bold highwayman who crosseth our path. But pray what chance of escape is there from a professed friend, a traitor, to betray you with a friendly salute, smiling in your face, and, at the same time, watching for an opportunity of finishing you in the dark: without notice, without charge, without trial or *chance* of escape, and without precedent, except by trained Jesuits who are shunned and despised by common inquisitors. Long ago, many years since, it was asserted that the Wesleyan Association could not by possibility prosper, and there, as reformers, we would leave it; but we would not leave its poor slaves in its shams, snares, and delusions, the people themselves shall be *welcome* to our discussion society; and if the Reformers can be kept from amalgamating with the Association, its principles, and practices, the people of the association will be heartily welcome to the reform fold, together with all the injured and scattered branches of the Methodist people. It is the men who have made the corrupt systems, and it is their systems which support the men in their corruption, and in their great wrong against the people, their rights, their liberties, their usefulness, and against the prosperity of the sacred work and cause

of God, in Methodism as his church, and in the world by its instrumentality.

Those *facts* now advanced relative to the Wesleyan Association are with you for your *discussion* and serious consideration, in order further through them to test the "rules" now in your hands, so far as those rules are approved of for the government of the church.

You have now something more in the same direction, *involving* directly and extensively the CONNEXIONAL GOVERNMENT of the Wesleyan Association, which it is to be hoped and trusted will assist to decide the reformers against the contemplated amalgamation; proving by *facts* that the *whole system* is rotten to the core. That it is not so much *amalgamation* which is now wanted, but the conversion and purification of the systems, severally and jointly, which must precede any consistent and advantageous amalgamation. The chaff must be separated from the wheat, the bad must first be thrown away, and *then* the good preserved may be safely and usefully united together: the system of reform must not be *patched.* The institutions of Methodism, "as it should be," and those as it should not be, can never be brought to accord; any attempt to combine such systems would be as absurd as it would be destructive; with the various *old* defective systems, the *new* cannot be incorporated.

You are now further called on to consider its connectional government in conjunction with its local government, that it must depend upon their mutual soundness in order to form and establish a correct system, this will be found to be essential. The connexional government being formed out of the local, or circuit government, for certain purposes connected with, and on behalf of, the circuits, the members of the annual assembly are composed of the *messengers* of the connexional churches, the churches are the operating cause of that assembly from year to year for the purpose of carrying out their designs as a connexion of churches, either by delivering and acting on particular messages, or the exercise of discretionary power, notwithstanding they are virtually accountable to those churches who sent them to act for them in trust. While it is not the province of the annual assembly to interfere with the church or circuit government, that assembly being only its messengers, yet the church or circuit government must have a controlling influence and power over its own

messengers in that assembly from year to year. Having advanced those ideas, in order to make the way plain in calling to an account the annual assembly, as the executive power in the connexional government, some facts have now to be produced.

It being the province of the Midsummer quarterly meeting to communicate information relative to the appointment of delegates to the ensuing annual assembly to the President, the chairman of the quarterly meeting, duly held the 28th June, 1838, in accordance with his province, duly sent a statement of the meeting, naming the three delegates appointed by that meeting to attend the annual assembly. That statement, required and sent, was duly received by the President.

But, subsequently, it being ascertained that the annual assembly had recognised only *one* of the three regularly appointed delegates, but that it had actually received *two officials—imposters*—as delegates to the annual assembly—by the bye, his "Reverence" . . . . being one of the two—the Chairman of the quarterly meeting wrote to the President of the annual meeting relative to that act of deception and imposition; and, through him, giving the assembly a full and particular account of the sorry affair, and of the genuine quarterly meeting with its indisputable authority to appoint the delegates, with which *authority* the annual assembly had illegally interfered and set aside, by receiving the two spurious delegates from the illegally postponed meeting; demonstrating that that meeting had no more authority to send delegates to the annual assembly than it had to send members direct to the House of Commons; giving the particulars of the "Leaders' meeting" postponement of the "quarterly meeting" as the proof, ground, and basis of the *genuineness* of the quarterly meeting held June 28, 1838, and the consequent *illegality* of the postponed meeting, and any of its acts and deeds constituting the appointments therein made impostures. Let it not be misunderstood, the appeal to the annual assembly was not made in reference to any misrule of the "Leaders' meeting," or any other meeting of the circuit, as requiring its interference, that not being its province, but as it became the province of the circuit to interfere with the annual assembly whenever it betrayed its trust; hence the chairman of the circuit quarterly meeting strenuously insisted on the annual assembly rejecting the imposture. And, mark,

the chairman of the quarterly meeting offered to come to the annual assembly to give any explanation and confirmation, or any further proof on the subject that might be required, but that offer was *not* accepted, not being quite to its taste. The whole of this statement was read and submitted to the annual assembly. What more could have been done? But the result. Were the *impostors* rejected by the *annual assembly?* They were not! They were retained and admitted to act as if they had been the *duly* appointed of the *circuit,* instead of being the *ringleaders* of the outrage, committing the grossest insolence and violence over the people, their rights and liberties. And all this in the face of declared law and the strongest evidence, which stand out boldly in a narrow compass to challenge a successful contradiction; hence, what can be plainer? "Prove to us that the *Leaders' meeting* had no *riyht* to *postpone* the *quarterly meeting*, and you *prove* to us that the two persons who appeared at the annual assembly in the character of delegates were an imposture, with which that assembly had identified itself, and thus violating the connexional constitution so much boasted of.

This is not a hasty charge against the connexional government of the Wesleyan Association, it is *not* the exception, but the rule itself—it being its confirmed practice. Being anxious that the connexional government should not continue to commit suicide, as the circuit government had done, the Chairman of the quarterly meeting again wrote the President at the following annual assembly, drawing the attention of the assembly to the *unrectified* case of the delegates for the preceding year, as well as to the *fact* of the *spurious ones* then present from the same circuit; but whilst the assembly did not attempt to gainsay the repeated facts, for the best of all reasons, it could not; yet the imposters were allowed to give evidence against the Chairman, the only legal Chairman in the circuit, who had been illegally expelled by a "Leaders' meeting," which expulsion being null and void, as proved to the annnal assembly, it was bound to have acted in accordance therewith, instead of acting on the testimony of the direct abettors of that illegal expulsion, then present without legal authority, that evidence stating that the Chairman, the complainant, "had not been a member of the society for the last twelve months." This being something like thrashing the complainant with the two ends of the stick, first expelling

him out of the church without *notice, charge,* or *trial*; and, 2ndly, because he was *thus* expelled, "twelve months since," that that was a reason why he should not be heard as a complainant in an assembly where he had an indisputable right to be impartially heard; but on *that* evidence the complainant's case was dismissed by the Wesleyan Association Annual Assemby in the year of our Lord 1839.

That decision was not arrived at by surprise. It was a deliberative act. It was the second annual assembly where everything on the subject had been fully explained. This circumstance brings to recollection a circumstance of the old doomed Wesleyan Conference, when it had deliberated at two of its succeeding conferences before closing its chapels against revival services and the preaching of the doctrine of Christian Perfection. God knows whether or not the Wesleyan Association was also doomed from that period, but it is a decided impression, amounting to a conviction, that the smile of heaven has never rested on it as a *connexion* since that period. The sentiment of persons acquainted with its history is well known—"Of all the Methodist denominations that are in existence, the Wesleyan Methodist Association is the only one that has declined, retrograded, and decayed from the very commencement of its history to the present time."

All the boasted connexional government of the Wesleyan Association consists in the protection of one class of officials from another order of officials; and that those classes, or orders, of officials having amalgamated and become one they are content—they are concerned for no other reform in Methodism. The people, in their rights, liberties, privileges, and usefulness, is no concern of the officials' government of the Wesleyan Association, unless it may give the executive power some petty concern how it may best keep up "the sham, the snare, the delusion." But the people, from time to time, finding it out, and forsaking it, no doubt its officials are pressed to extend the borders of its shams to the Wesleyan Reformers; but the reformers must be accounted doubly mad to fall into its snares after the warning afforded them. Of course, the Association will make all it can out of the idea "that the Reformers have sought it and not it them." Let that go for as much as it is worth. To know its worth you may apply to it the following sentiment:—"The secret of Dante's struggle through life was in the reckless sarcasm

of his answer to the Prince of Verona, who asked him how he could account for the fact that, in the household of princes, the court fool was in greater favour than the philosopher? '*Similarity of mind*,' said the fierce genius, '*is all over the world the source of friendship*.'" It had been hoped that the reformers would have improved through the association blunders; but are the people themselves doomed to be disappointed in this respect. Were your dependence on official reformers, your hopes indeed would be most slender. There appears to be such an evident affinity between officials, wherever they can be found, to support one another, that your only hope and chance must be with the people themselves in the "Discussion Society;" and if you are not greatly wanting in yourselves, you shall be more than a match for all the officials, severally and jointly.

From those facts now proved against connexional government of the Wesleyan Association, the just inference to be drawn is this:—That *it* has not only repeatedly sanctioned the violation of its declared general principles, but also the most vital portion of them in detail, viz., that of rejecting the legitimate authority of the churches, or circuits, in the management of their own affairs. This conduct in the annual assembly infers that *every* circuit in its connexion which had their representatives at those assemblies were under the government of *official misrule*, as otherwise, any and every individual of them would and should have entered their protest against the *misrule* there and then proved. Therefore, it was in effect "let him that is without this official sin cast the first stone;" but not even a censure was cast by those who were then convicted of violating the law themselves, but one by one being convicted in his own mind left the guilty at large to commit or repeat any crime against the church, they being criminal partners. So it must and does appear that the seeds of despotism had everywhere sprung up; that the whole connexion had become rotten to the core, from circumference to centre, and from centre to circumference. Ichabod being written on the whole, *i. e.*, "the glory is departed" there being no *defence* for the *glory* in the Wesleyan Association. With all its high profession how is this to be accounted for? It is "the mystery of iniquity" at work; and if we dive into the mystery it will be found that Satan himself hath a hand in all this. "Woe to the *Wesleyan Association!* for the devil is

come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."

By way of confirmation of the Wesleyan Association misrule, you have an extract of an article taken from a provincial journal:—

October 25, 1838.

To the Editor,

"SIR,—You will oblige me by inserting in Friday's . . the following answer to a malicious and anonymous attack on private character, which appeared in your last paper signed "A Churchman."

To the Members of the Wesleyan Association.

DEAR BRETHREN,—When slander and falsehood are substitutes for argument and truth, when plain and palpable charges are met by shuffling equivocation and personal abuse, it invariably proves, on investigation, that the parties guilty of these mean devices, resort to them for want of better means of defence against the piercing home thursts of TRUTH. I have been led into these remarks by reading a letter in last Tuesday's . . . . signed, "A Churchman." It is evidently the production of a person well versed in the art of mixing up the smallest particle of truth with the greatest quantity of the contrary commodity: infusing therein a portion of his own vulgar bile, gilding the pill with a little disinterestedness, and cramming the bolus, *nolens volens*, down the public throat with the long pole of holiness and Christian philanthrophy (?) I shall try, by administering a little truth as an emetic, before I have done, to compel this Mr. Churchman to eat his own nauseous words.

The David of ancient times went boldly, armed but with his sling, to meet the Goliah of the Philistines; but the *D—'s* of modern days skulk under the hedge, and thence launch forth the arrows of slander; or, like the ass in the fable, clothe themselves in the lion's hide, and in safety bray forth Billingsgate and falsehood. How are the mighty fallen!!

Dear brethern,—You must all recollect when we separated ourselves from the Old Connexion it was that we might no longer be rode over roughshod by any body of men, and that we might in future be governed on sound, liberal, New

Testament principles. During the long continuance of agitation which preceded our establishment as a Christian church, each and every word of the eloquent leaders of the association breathed liberty and equality. Whilst F—— spread abroad "the principle of the right of interference, on the part of the members of the church, in the regulation of all its affairs," R.—— boldly bearded the monster Ecclesiastical Tyranny, and triumphantly advocated the liberal and scriptural doctrines of church government, which *form the basis of the origin* of our association. Time rolled on, and the power which, during an unsettled and stormy period, they had been allowed to assume, became sweet. They began to look upon it as a right, and were extremely loath to part with it, that the liberal original principles of our association might be fully brought into operation. *Then* Brother . . . . by every means in his power, attempted to arouse the members to a consciousness of the fact that in rushing from Scylla they had fallen upon Charybdis; that, for the tyranny of a superintendent, which was almost exclusively felt by the officers, they have exchanged the domineering power of a knot of officials knit together by the bonds of self interest and exclusive feelings.

Brother . . . . accordingly issued notices:—"Wesleyan Association. All the brethern are particularly requested to attend the quarterly meeting, to be held in the Committee-room, on Thursday, 28th June, 1838, (the coronation day,) commencing at one o'clock;" but the officers took the alarm. They feared the extraordinary attendance of members on that very favourable day would swamp the designs of the clique; and, although there are several "Leaders' meetings" in the circuit, and all Leaders' meetings are inferior and subservient to the quarterly meeting, yet ONE of the Leaders' meetings had the impudence to pretend to postpone the quarterly meeting of the whole circuit. This, of course, was not to be borne; and although this illegal attempt to postpone had the effect of keeping away many members, yet the quarterly meeting was regularly and punctually held, and, in the absence of the Chairman of the circuit, Mr. . . . . officiated as Chairman. And now, Mr. "Churchman" you say, "I ascertained that this boasted quarterly meeting was no meeting at all, and that he was the only member present, both judge and jury in his own case." The only answer this demands is, that

the whole statement is one outrageous and impudent LIE! And I challenge the clique who have disgracefully smuggled a hetereogenous apology for rules into the society, to show one iota in the "illiterate effusion of this blockhead" which is not dictated by sound scriptural spirit, and is infinitely superior to the "spurious rules" which disclaim all connection with common sense, Scripture, or liberality, and which are a beautiful exemplification of the extended figure of speech—"humbug."

Since the above period, Brother . . . . has been tried, expelled, re-tried—the former decision cancelled (without any legal trial, or even hearing,)—and yet not one word, as far as I can learn, had been said against his moral or religious character until this letter of "a Churchman" (which looks very like an official document) applied the elegant and courteous epithets of "coarse, illiterate buffoon," of "consummate impudence," "stupid blockhead," "wicked," "dangerous character," "suspicious character, if not of decidedly immoral life;" and then, by way of climax, "I have proof that the Rochdale correspondence, so much boasted of, was, if not a forgery, very near allied to it; and that the whole scheme is a refuge of lies to deceive the ignorant and unwary. But let the writer beware if he provokes the majesty of truth, the touch of Ithuriel's spear will unmask the traitor, and exhibit him to an insulted community, and to the world, in his disgusting character." Poor thing! his zeal or terror overcomes his discretion. *He has proof,* from head quarters I presume; but he won't produce it, I can assure the members, for the best of all possible reasons—he cannot. *Christian brethern,* is the above the language of a Christian-like spirit? Does it not betray every symptom of the "galled jade wincing" under the lash of *honest, manly truth?* I have been acquainted with Brother . . . . for many years; and even those who most deprecate his present fearless conduct will agree with me in pronouncing him to be a devout, honest, and up right man; confident in the justness of his cause, and resolutely bent upon working out, by every righteous means, the freedom and liberty of his brethern.—ONE OF THE MEMBERS who was present at the quarterly meeting, 28th June."

All this mystery is subject for *discussion.* It is in the "Discussion Society" that we are to fathom and understand

something of official mystery. The mystery is not to be a cloak for our ignorance. A mystery is not a thing utterly unknown at to its being, but a matter of which we have clear evidence as to its existence; at the same time it may be incomprehensible how it is that all classes of officials have got it into their heads that *they* are the men, and *more*. For the officials to play the man is laudable, but *more* must not be allowed them, the iniquity must be overturned. From that conceited mystery the Wesleyan Association has not yet been reformed. As reformers, let us be consistent. Have we not pledged ourselves to the removal of the Wesleyan Conference system? then should we not pledge ourselves a hundred-fold to the removal of the Wesleyan Association system. The tables seem to be turned. Amalgamation with Reformers, forsooth. The Association system is to be regarded as the greatest enemy to reform; because the most insidious, therefore the most dangerous, coming nearest to reform in theory but the farthest from it in practice. Reformers should be the declared and avowed opponents to the system, and to *all* such like systems. On such work we must assist one another in the "Discussion Society." Really, this amalgamation is making fresh work for us to engage in; and, perhaps, the Official Reformers may be keeping our heads and hands pretty fully employed in testing and trying the brethern whom they may be disposed to *invite* to unite with Reformers. Whenever there may be an amalgamation subject brought on the carpet, as sure will there be work for serious discussion, as we are not aware of a single Methodist Church in existence but requires reforming *prior* to amalgamation. Why church amalgamation, in order to be satisfactory and successful, is one of the most difficult things in the world. It may all appear very fine—all sound and very plausible; but, to be right and safe, we should keep out from amalgamation till we could keep out no longer—until *constrained* to keep out no longer, or we might be like unto some individuals who "marry in haste and repent at leisure." It is one thing to reform a church, and quite another thing to deal with one which professes to be reformed and established already. Established errors in a church are stubborn things to cope with; much more so, it may be conceived, than when there is a complete revolution, like unto the situation of us Reformers who acknowledge that we have plenty of rubbish to be removed.

Moreover, has there not been quite enough of "If you don't like us leave us." Therefore, better to sit down than to rise up and fall down.

However, people "not being wise at all hours," we had better be on our guard—a fearful man being a careful man. Relative to the Wesleyan Association we *must* be *doubly* guarded. It comes to us through a distorted medium, not free from plausibility glossed over.

We are writing no silly romantic tale, but narrating a story of the heart, the heart with all its lofty impulses and sacred memories, but, alas! its unknown weakness also. The tempter is ever at hand, not as a "roaring lion" always, but disguised often as an angel of light. It is to the subtle unsuspected foe, not to the open enemy, that the good fall victims. It may be no imputation on the people's sagacity that they have been deceived. The officials, accustomed to simulate apart, that they might easily have deluded those more suspicious than a simple-minded people. But the people must be put upon their guard. The people may not suspect their purpose. As they could counterfeit a love for liberty, so they could also imitate deep feeling; some of them are of those extraordinary moral monstrosities, indeed, who can assume the appearance of profound emotion, without even experiencing it, and pretend to a fervour of religious sentiment, with souls abandoned entirely to selfishness, vanity, and conceit. Would you have believed that such whole scenes have been planned and rehearsed beforehand, in this little masquerade dress. But we must not leave such conduct to complete the enthralment of the people. Some persons do not seem to be aware that one half of human knowledge consists of a knowledge of human delusions; and no person is qualified to be an instructor of the people, who is not conversant with such knowledge, such knowledge is very useful, it opens people's eyes.

Discuss the subject on all sides and in all its bearings—there is a light side as well as a dark side, yes! but the principal one is what we tell you, to deceive or be deceived. On one side, there is every thing to charm the eye and ear and to gladden the heart, year after year we enjoyed them, delightful to the young-hearted and unsuspecting, who, all trust and confidence, take everything for gold that appears on the surface bright and shining; but now, on the other side, we may scarcely know how, we have discovered so hideous a counte-

nance beneath the mask that former pleasure wore, that we are completely disgusted with its most alluring aspect; but to produce order out of confusion, from a discouraging and heterogeneous heap of varieties, is the work to be done. This is a subject for arrangement. We are merely groping our way, with a few special cases, as feelers, to begin with. We take not this opportunity to pay the debt of any old official grudge. The past shall not be ransacked for all the little minutæ of their past history, or dark hints thrown out to prejudice still more the public mind. There are cowardly stabs in the dark, from some parties who would have been livid with fear had their victims been free to face them. They feel that they themselves cannot succeed with reason—their own reason—and they do not believe in the existence of any other: therefore, they abandon reason as useless, and say, "suppress it." It is their infatuation. They must use force or persecution to propagate their principles, for they cannot succeed without it. This persecution they will use in time. Wesleyan Association officials and Wesleyan Reform officials "*are* brethren, instruments of cruelty *are in* their habitations. O, my soul, come thou not into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united."

We, also, have a right to be personally severe. With certain of the Association, hereafter, we can have no transaction. We have been tutored in the school of expediency sufficiently long to be quite aware that certain reform officials are "a great catch," in spite of their extravagant pretensions for the rights and liberties of the *church* and *circuit*. But, thanks be, the church has begun to learn to take thought for itself, that it be not too easily *caught* by an existence of *acted* falsehood and systematic deceit. It is in the people's *ignorance only* that official despots have to trust; ah! but can they securely trust here even with their additional ramification of *amalgamation?* Severe we are. Better be free with coarseness, than a prisoner with refinement—though best to be courteous and brave in upholding the fame of our rights and liberty, without fear, and without reproach—with all honour. Thus we would stand on the broad ground of our Christian manhood, be our numbers more or less of the people. But we can afford to be softening in expression with an invincible firmness stamped on our character. We would absolve them from their scruples of conscience; but we have done with

their idle mockeries, with the absurd parade about liberty—subduing an evil nature into a vicious wheedle more repulsive than open malice. We know them well, in spite of their disguise. There is such a thing as a bad principle in a good cause. The advocates of which may be somewhat unfortunate in their premises, and find the bitter cup overpower the reason. Time and absence are frail adversaries, when busy memories act as sentinels to oppose them; and such sentinels active, energetic, and determined, with plenty of courage and self-possession to back them up.

We are not at all disposed to make invidious distinctions, we only feel disposed to silence boasting, and humble self-righteousness; and this seems to be one of the principles upon which the divine government of the church is conducted. A boaster has always, in some way or other, a brand upon him; no individual has any absolute right to triumph over another, there is always a compensation for some defect, and a defect for some superiority. We are doing what the French did at their revolution, only after another fashion. They equalised and ennobled all by calling every man "Monsieur." We are equalising and ennobling all by reverting to the ancient and apostolical custom of truth and simplicity—"all ye are brethren." This equiformity will no doubt have its own peculiarities, and the severely dogmatical will not commune with it; but all are parts of the great broken body, and it is their non-communionism that makes them the broken body—and of that body this is the era in which we live. The next era is that of the united body, which is our object and aim in respect to reform in Methodism. This is the decision to which we have come: that practical knowledge is power, and union is strength. We have affirmed that the people must look after their own state, and that they are not at the mercy of every breath of ridicule, but that they have absolute principles for their direction and protection. The people have an absolute element in the Bible, the most absolute of all books.

Relative to such amalgamation, what some call sanctioning this suit, is, in fact, promising that we shall unite with them; and their mild term of *recommending* covers a stern command to obey, implicitly, without any childish nonsense or ridiculous objections. We tell you we are *sold*, bargained for, as completely as though we were in law—what we are in fact—bond-slaves; and this ceremony of consulting the people is

merely a sham, as ceremonies generally are. In strict truth it is nothing else. If they had considered it of any consequence to *understand* us, if they had recognised in us any *right* or *capacity* to judge for ourselves in a matter that concerns our whole future existence, they would have ascertained the state of our feelings towards *them*, before concluding the bargain with *themselves*. They *not* having done so reduces the affair to a mere matter of business transaction; affection it is, of course, idle to speak of, they will not expect it, having never sought it.

Why attempt to keep up this flimsy disguise? If they think it necessary to make some fine speeches on the occasion, it would be more to the purpose to address them to the official order, for which they would unite with us. Since they have thought fit to consult one another hitherto, it will be as well to continue to do so, we are not yet *bound* to obey them.

But, supposing that after the aversion we have shown towards them they still press this union, will not that one act show such an utter baseness of soul, such a hateful slave-driver's spirit, as completely to justify us if our hatred were tenfold what it is? The united officials may almost gasp with amazement at the resistance offered to their imperious will, by victims of many years of systematic tyranny. "We are the best judges of what is fitting for you; at your peril disobey us!" And to crown the whole—all this in the name of reform.

They may seem no longer anxious to put us off with even false promises, but rather to let us understand we are a commodity to be trafficked with—to be bought and sold.

What has been accomplished for the Methodist people themselves, during the last long seven years of visionary agitation for reform, but waste of time—precious time?

"Call back time! call back time!" exclaimed a dying man, who felt too late the neglect of its improvement. "Take time by the forelock," says the proverb. And the Scripture, in solemn tone, emphatically avers, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might." *Individual* exertion at the present momentous crisis appears particularly necessary. Every one should be at his post, every one should be up and doing, in the Private Members' Discussion Society.

The eighth meeting of delegates from the Wesleyan Reform Societies was held in August, 1856, at Bristol. In viewing

its proceedings we apprehend that the said reformers are no nearer reform than they were at the commencemant of their career seven years ago. We now record it, as a most melancholy fact, that so much of the people's precious time, and so much of their pecuniary support, should be spent without arriving nearer at the object—*reform*. As we proceed we apprehend no difficulty in substantiating the assertion now made; far from that, it shall be our especial business to prove that the said reformers have taken decided steps in a contrary direction; that they are now making work for reformers to *undo* in the "amalgamation"—the official amalgamation being fraught with deadly corruption under the garb of reform.

The only object in exposing the united official corruption is, that the people themselves may be on their guard—that they may be thoroughly acquainted with their real position, in order to make a successful stand against all officialcraft. The stand the people should make is not to attempt to reason with the official reformers any more than they themselves *should have* done with the conference officials, as in either case an attempt might as well be made to reason with the wind. The official reformers acknowledge thus much relative to the conference, and that by woeful experience, and ourselves the same of the reform officials. But while we ourselves should learn salutary lessons, the official reformers continue to beat the air relative to the conference officials, in making it their principal work of operation to show up their misdeeds in all their extent and detail, while they might have confined it to a single point "stop the supplies" on the declaration of the conference law "Let no man," &c. That law enforced merited no other treatment. John Wesley and his conference, relative to the government of the Methodist Church, should have been treated with the utmost contempt, mixed with pity, just as the people themselves should treat the united official reformers when they duly understand *their* character and policy in the government of the church, as *reformers*, which indescribably aggravates their case, who have, in fact, ignored the people as much as Wesley and his conference. It is now official against official, old and new, Association and Reform officials, a "battle royal," diamond cut diamond. Thus the devil keeps them fully employed doing mischief in the church and the world. It is against those un-united and united officials that the people are now called on to make a

dead stand, when officials shall find "facts stubborn things." Only let the *supplies* be *stopped* and they will be as tame as a fox in a trap. They must be kept from doing mischief; the trap must be so close that not a single loophole must be allowed to exist in their "declaration of principles." This must be a subject for the people's *discussion*. The officials dread *such* discussions; hence, "It has also come under the notice of your committee that many unpleasant discussions and misunderstandings have arisen in circuits from the want of well constructed rules for the internal regulations of the affairs of the societies." And then the delegates are recommended, at the end of seven years, to endeavour to introduce such a code of rules. But the officials would excuse their slow endeavours thus, "All great principles are of slow growth in the minds of the masses of society." At the same time they would hinder the people from the *discussion* of them. Note the amalgamation affair. The people are now bargained for by the *united* officials—they are the Alpha and Omega. They have agreed to sell and deliver the people at the conditions agreed on; and then it will be the old conference over again—"If you do not like us you can leave us;" that is all the freedom we have to expect from the amalgamation. The Association, being the oldest in corruption, must carry the sway. Freedom is not their "bond." They will not admit it in the *name* of the united body, see the Reform report—"The Association brethern strongly object to *Wesleyan Methodist free churches*, especially to the term *free*." We must all know that to be *free* is to be at liberty, not under constraint, slavery, imprisonment, or necessity, permitted, allowed, unrestrained, open, ingenuous, expressing one's sentiments without reserve, generous, or liberal, voluntary, invested with privileges, possessing anything without vassalage, *all* of which is excluded from the very name which the Association contends for, so says the Reform report, "especially the term *free*." This is its very stamp and character—dictation. John Wesley is gone the way of all flesh, and we will have no more dictators. We have had more than enough of Wesley's despotism. "O execrable son, so to aspire above his brethren, to himself assuming authority usurped, from God, not given. He gave us only authority over beast, fish, fowl, dominion absolute; that right we hold by His donation. But man over man He made not Lord, such title to himself preserving. Human

left from human *free.*" Yes! John Wesley acted towards the Methodist people as the "potter over the clay." Now, if Wesley, in his official character, is not to escape exposure and censure, think you that we are bound to treat with delicacy any succeeding official despot. But for the mischief they may be capable of doing they should be passed by as unworthy of notice. But there is an enemy, of whom we hesitate not to assert, he has ever been mixed up with the official craft in Methodism of all parties. The object of that foe is to do all the mischief possible without being noticed, least an alarm should be taken; hence he is subtle in most of his operations. We hesitate not to affirm that there is now a mighty conflict going on between the powers of darkness and the powers of light in this controversy in Methodism. The question for us to decide is, which side shall we ourselves take? Are we to be led captive by the devil at his will? or are we to be found resisting him in the name and in the strength of Jesus Christ? Though the Scriptures speak sparingly of the nature and functions of this malignant spirit, they say enough of them to convey to us a striking idea of his power, and to render it formidable to us. The Scriptures tell us that he tempts men to sin, witness the wiles which he practised on our first parents, witness the name of *Tempter* given to him in the Gospel history.

Let us not waste our time in declaiming against the manners of the times. Mankind have always been bad enough, and good people have always been too scarce. There are, however, we must allow, some times, and some circumstances, in which Satan hath employed more means, and hath striven with more success, to execute his fatal designs of destroying mankind than in others. But the plan of the Son of God is opposite to that of Satan. ***For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.*** 1st John 3, 8.

Let it not be understood for an instant that there are any objections to amalgamation with any or all of the Methodist sections—they never ought to have been separated—provided it could be accomplished on a scriptural platform; but we hesitate not to assert that that has not been the object with the present amalgamation from its very commencement. It commenced with the Reform officials in 1855, when they had no organisation for themselves as reformers. So you may

plainly perceive that the official Reformers have not the slightest pretention of a common platform for the people themselves to amalgamate on, the people are ignored. The present attempt at amalgamation is nothing more nor less than an official affair from beginning to end, without any Scriptural basis for the Methodist churches. The officials have told you that it is based on their "declaration of principles," but what of that? The question for the people is, are those declarations of principles correct, are they as a whole Scriptural? If not they have been attempting amalgamation without a foundation, building castles in the air. The official declaration "that the admission of members into the church, the exercise of discipline upon them, and their exclusion from the church, are rights vested solely in the hands of church members," so far that is correct, it being Scriptural; but mark, those very said officials have made an *exception*, to the *people's vested rights solely in the hands of church members*, which they had been making a parade of before the world, as if there was no one private member endowed with common sense, or a God above us who had prohibited the addition to his own written word, "to be exercised by them either directly OR *representatively*, and that it is the right of members to be present at all meetings for the transaction of general business of the church; that the nomination and election of all office-bearers is the inalienable right of the church."

We must take some little pains here, in this production, to expose the low cunning of Reform official craft; we see no such hypocrisy in Wesley, the Pope of Methodism; we see no such double-dealing with Wesley's successors, the Conference officials; they tell you plain enough that all are ignored by them, leaders' meetings and all officials, they would seem above saying one thing and meaning another, they stick to the Pope's bull—the *sacred deposit*—"and sooner than give up one iota they would first see Methodism annihilated." Now this is plain satanic insolence, and it should be treated as such; but with the official Reformers the enemy would appear as an angel of light, showing largely "the rights vested solely in the hands of church members;" but then he steps in with his *or*—or what? he could not say "thus it is written," for the word *representatively* is not to be found in the Bible, either in New or the Old Testament. It was not wanted there, there was no use for it. The nearest word that we find to it in the

Scriptures is *reproach*, which signifies scorn or derision, shame, infamy or disgrace, censures and reflections, injury, for "thus it is written." Then the "angel of light" helps the officials over this crooked stile, "if it cannot be regarded as *law* then it must be called your *tradition*, either written or unwritten, and to be held equal, if not weightier, than the law itself, in all ecclesiastical regulations." But we ourselves are not at all at a loss to understand the officials', OR, that is, "the Leaders' meeting," which swallows up all of the officials sham boasted rights of the people. This *or* is the loophole whereby the officials escape out of the hands of church members, and turn round to play the despot, to crush the people at their will. If such officials could but have a fair share of the plunder they would not hesitate to amalgamate with any set of like officials however associated, with this or that, New or Old Connexion, at home or abroad, when they would join to celebrate a grand union to *rob* the people of their *rights*. This is the present and all past reform in Methodism, proving the cure to be worse than the disease. But for the mischief of the amalgamation we could afford to turn it into ridicule like unto "the mountain in labour;" but, alas! out creeps a "viper," making work for the people to do: to arise, slay and destroy *united* despotism.

But for the sake of the unsuspecting people themselves we must try to exercise our patience, and to be more explicit. The people should take a lesson from the Reform officials themselves, and, therefore, at once "stop the supplies" from those official scribes, who strikingly remind us of certain officials of our Lord's time with their interrogations, viz.:—"Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders, for they wash not their hands when they eat bread?" With the Reform officials there is much frivolous nonsense, that our precious time must not be spent about, troublesome they may be, they take more pleasure in blaming others than in amending themselves. But we have to deal with their *fatal errors*; man is ever fond of mending the work of his Maker, and hence he has been led to put his finishing hand even to Divine revelation! The Jews may attempt, with some plausibleness, to contend for their traditions, which signifies what is called the *oral* law, which they distinguish from the *written* law. The Jews feign that when God gave *Moses* the *written* law he gave him also the oral law, which is the interpretation of

the former. According to history the following example will prove in what estimation these traditions are held by the Jews. "The words of the scribes are lovely beyond the words of the law, for the words of the law are *weighty* and *light*, but the words of the scribes are *all* weighty." If the official reformers were about to make a speech on the last quotation they would say, "Just like the Wesleyan Conference with their sacred deposit," which, among a host of sayings aud doings, "Mr. So and So said, I will not sit here to hear the New Testament paraded against the minutes of Conference. Hear, hear!" The official Reformers answering the Wesleyan Conference, as our Lord did the Jewish officials, and said unto them, "Why do ye also transgress the commandments of God by your tradition?" But alas! this is but the two common charge against the officials of the churches in all ages. *Ye have made the word of God of no effect by your traditions, q.d.*, ye accuse my disciples of transgressing the *traditions* of the *elders*, I accuse you of transgressing the *commandments* of *God*, and that too in favour of our own traditions, thus preferring the traditions of men to the positive precepts of God. Pretenders to zeal often prefer superstitious usages to the Divine law, and human inventions to the positive duties of Christianity. Our blessed Lord unmasks these hypocrites; and it may be observed that, when a hypocrite is found out, he should be exposed to all. This may lead to his salvation. If he be permitted to retain his falsely acquired character, how can he escape perdition? "But in vain they do worship me, teaching, *for* doctrines, the commandments of men." By the traditions of the elders, not only the word of God was perverted, but his worship also was greatly corrupted. But the Jews were not the only people who have acted thus, whole Christian churches, as well as sects and parties, have acted in the same way. We must differ materially from the official reformers, however repeatedly they may have asserted, "It is not on account of *doctrine* that we differ, but only on account of *discipline*." Men must not mould the worship of God to their fancy. It is not *what* they think *will do, is proper*, and *innocent*, but what God himself *has prescribed*, that he will acknowledge as his worship. However *sincere* a man may be in a worship of his own invention, or *man's commandment*, yet it profits him nothing. To condemn such may appear to some illiberal, but whatever may be said in behalf of sincere heathens, and others who have

not had the advantages of Divine Revelation, there is no excuse for the man who has the BIBLE before him. "And he called the multitude and said unto them, Hear, and understand." Having shown the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, and condemned them for the unwarrantable stress which they laid on their vain and precarious traditions, he took the opportunity to undeceive the people, and let them see how insignificant that outward strictness was on which the Pharisees insisted, *and said, Hear and understand.* From these words, *he that hath ears to hear let him hear,* all spoken to the multitude. It is evident that, in our Lord's judgment, the whole multitude was capable of understanding those things which the Pharisees did not understand, and by which their traditions were overthrown. But, like all officious officials, *the Pharisees were offended.* None so liable to take offence as *such officials,* when you attempt to take away their false props and question their sincerity. Besides, an official must never be suspected of *ignorance,* for they are the men, and wisdom must die with them! But our Lord said, *Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up. Let them alone, they be blind leaders of the blind.* This passage does not at all mean that blind leaders should not be pointed out to the people, that they may avoid being deceived by them; for this our Lord does frequently, and warns his disciples, and the people in general, against all such false teachers as the scribes and Pharisees were; and though he bids men *do what they heard them say, while they sat in the chair of Moses,* yet he certainly meant no more than that they should be observant of the moral law when read to them out of the sacred book; yet neither does he tell them to *do all* these false teachers said, for he testifies that they had put such false glosses on the law that, if followed, would endanger the salvation of their souls. Therefore, *give up these blind men.* A literal attention to these words of our Lord produced the reformation. But alas, for the blind teachers, who not only destroy their own souls but those of their flocks! Like priests, like people. They who even wish such God speed are partakers of their evil deeds. But shall not the poor deceived people escape? No, both shall fall into the pit of perdition together; for they should have searched the Scriptures, and not trusted to the ignorant sayings of corrupt men, no matter of what sect or party. He who has the Bible in his hands,

or within his reach, and can read it, has no excuse. The true knowledge of the *spirit* of the Gospel is a thing more uncommon than we imagine among the generality of Christians, and even of the learned. Pride and envy blind the hearts of men, and cause them often to act not only the most wicked, but the most ridiculous, parts. He who takes the book of God for the rule of his faith and practice can never go astray; but the mazes and perplexities produced by the traditions of elders, human creeds, confessions of faith, and declaration of principles, there is no end.

We may wonder at the dullness of the disciples when we find that they did not fully understand our Lord's meaning in the very obvious parable about *the blind leading the blind.* But should we not be equally struck with their inquisitive temper. They did not understand, but they could not rest till they did. They knew that their Lord could say nothing that had not the most important meaning in it; this meaning, in the preceding parable, they had not apprehended, and, therefore, they wish to have it further explained by himself. Do we imitate their docility and eagerness to comprehend the truth of God? Christ presses every occurrence into a means of instruction. The dullness of the disciples in the present case has been the means of affording us the fullest instruction on a point of the utmost importance. How necessary it is to have the fountain purified, that it may cease to send forth those streams of death.

The serious charge now to be brought against the Reform officials is, that they *have made the word of God of no effect by* their "declaration of principles."

Before entering into this charge and its consequences it is deemed right and proper to give here the full "declaration of principles."

In 1852 the following "Declaration of Principles" was issued by the reformers:—

1. That the "Church of Christ is the whole body of true believers."—Conference Catechism, part 2.

2. That Christ is head over all things to His church, and His Word the only and sufficient rule both of its faith and practice.

3. That no rules or regulations should be adopted but such as are in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, and have received the full concurrence of the church.

4. That the admission of members into the church, the exercise of discipline upon them, and their exclusion from the church, are rights vested solely in the hands of church members, to be exercised by them, either directly or representatively; and that it is the right of members to be present at all meetings for the transaction of the general business of the church.

5. That the nomination and election of all office-bearers is the inalienable right of the church.

6. That, while desirous of maintaining the connexional principle, we hold that all local courts should be independent, and their decisions affecting internal economy, final.

We should be very curious in examining all propositions that pretend to this honour of being general principles; and we should not, without just evidence, admit into this rank mere matters of common fame, or commonly received opinions; no, nor the general determinations of the learned, or the established articles of any church or nation, for there are many learned presumptions, many synodical and national mistakes, many established falsehoods, as well as many vulgar errors, wherein multitudes of men have followed one another for whole ages almost blindfold. It is of great importance for every man to be careful that these general principles are just and true, for one error may lead us into thousands which will naturally follow, if once a leading falsehood be admitted.

When we are arrived at manly age there is no person on earth, no set or society of men whatsoever, that have power and authority given them by God, the Creator and Governor of the world, absolutely to dictate to others their opinions or practices in moral and religious life. God has given every man reason to judge for himself, in higher or lower degrees. Where less is given less is required. But we are justly chargeable with criminal sloth, and misimprovement of talents with which our Creator has intrusted us, if we take all things for granted which others assert, and believe and practise all things which they dictate, without due examination.

Little tricks and deceits of sophistry, by sliding in or leaving out such words as entirely change the question, should be abandoned and renounced by all fair disputants and honest searchers after truth.

To that "Declaration of Principles" there is no objection excepting *two words*:—but, *Behold, how great a matter a*

little fire kindleth! and, *If ye fulfil the royal law, according to the Scriptures; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well; But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one* POINT, *he is guilty of all.* James iii, 8 to 10. For, if God should be obeyed in any one instance, he should be obeyed in all, as the authority and reason of obedience are the same in every case; he, therefore, who breaks one of those laws is, in *effect*, if not in fact, guilty of the whole. *For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled. Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach* THEM, *the same shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.*—Jesus Christ. Though all earth and hell should join together to hinder the accomplishment of the great designs of the Most High, yet it shall all be in vain: even the sense of a single letter shall not be lost. The *words* of God, which point out his designs, are as unchangeable as his *nature* itself. No jot or tittle of Christ's word shall fall to the ground.

Here is an agreement, "That Christ is head over all things to His church, and His Word the only and sufficient rule both of its faith and practice." No nearer approach can we make to the infinite and uncreated essence than the God-man. What had been begun in creation, what had been advanced a stage in man, was to be perfected in the God-man. Creation was the first coming forth of God from that eternity in which he dwelleth; man was the second coming forth of God; the the third and final coming forth of God was in the God-man. The first stage of that manifestation is power issuing in order; the second is righteousness, or law, issuing in government; the third is love issuing in redemption. No new or higher order of manifestation awaits the universe; because in the third and last manifestation the finite and infinite, God and man meet. The last has brought God himself before us. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we have seen His glory, the glory as of the Invisible God." All science might be termed theology, but the term is usually restricted to that science or system of truth that grows out of the person of the God-man.

It has been well remarked that it requires a large portion of the admixture of truth with error, in order to render the delusion permanent; but, in looking closely into the matter, it will be perceived that there is only one step between the sublime and the ridiculous.

If the fancied "Plan of Pacification" had not been broken, if it had been carried out, where the joint officials *ruled* on the *ex-officio* principle, in virtue of their office, we hesitate not to assert that there never would exist any other profession of reform by the officials in Methodism, and that whatever may be their pretentions it is now their only object. That object being once secured, their present "or representatively" would become a nonentity in their very profession, as it is now in *very fact*, plainly to be seen through their clumsy sophistry, an argument which carries the appearance of truth, but leads the unsuspecting into error. Of course the *ex-officio* principle is not once mentioned; but *two words*, only, as its bait, only two words out of one hundred, sixty and eight words which contained the "declaration of principles," which were prepared and agreed to by the committee, February 19, 1852, and in the following August was ratified by the delegates. An important document truly; but for the provision made in it, to usurp the authority of Christ, to make his word of no effect, and to ignore his church. Read from the 15th to 17th verse in the 18th chapter of Matthew, and see if there is "*or representatively*," or anything like it, in the passage. You may see at once that, "this declaration of principle" being now put into it would destroy the whole sense of it, the family of Christ violated! Let such a provision be made, by the powers that be, to interfere with our own family circle, either "directly *or representatively*"—to represent implies, to fill the place of or personate another—you need not be told that this would be the climax of the ridiculous, the climax of crime, and that the short and the long of it would be a revolution instanter, with such a national *declaration*. Yes! Hands off! hands off! would be the maddened rage!! Yet such is the provision made by official reformers against the rights and duties of the family of Christ Jesus, our only Lord and Master—not by representation, which they pretend, but by virtue of their office, by the *ex-officio* principle

The official Reformers boast of their learning lessons from the blunders of former reformers—they may have learnt a

little more cunning, but their very stamp is the same. For what is a "Leaders' meeting" but a self-elected and irresponsible body who have the supreme control of Christian churches. Yet this is contended for by modern Reformers, under the garb of representation. True, the present officials, wise in their way, do not attempt a definition of their "representatively," but their espoused brethren, the Association have given it in print, viz., "Representation.—The voice of the members of society by means of the leaders as their representatives;" and, "Leaders' meetings should have authority to transact all business connected with the government of the different societies." And yet this farce, "or representatively," is to be perpetuated. If the people have a voice in choosing a member for a leader for their own spiritual comfort and benefit, that can have nothing to do with the government of the church; that subject at the time is not so understood or spoke of neither on one part or the other. A Leaders' meeting to govern the church. Where is the authority? No such meeting in the Bible that we read of, nor of a single leader in the New Testament, except "the blind leader of the blind." Oh! we mean "representatively," which the people must know and understand that it is the officials' *mis*representation, in order to grasp and maintain the ruling power over the people, with closed doors, like so many petty Conferences. And it is the old Conference over again—"We are to judge you as your leaders, but you are not to judge us."—"*We* are to be governed and judged by our peers, by our *equals*." It was this, no doubt, that gave the officials in committee the most concern in preparing their "declaration of principles," and in the ratification of them by the delegates, when the official authority in the government of the church was contended for—"Would not consent for a church meeting to swamp the Leaders' meeting," and "would not consent to a mob government."

The officials will fight battles on principles of which they dare not analyze the foundations, because they are in behalf of their personal prejudices. Witness their "declaration of principles." Here is a positive acted falsehood. The people never did choose the Leaders as their representatives; and what is more, they never could do so as faithful members of Christ. The people were certainly not represented by the Leaders. And now, let it be repeated how necessary it is to

have the fountain purified, that it may cease to send forth those streams of death.

The internal condition of reform is far from satisfactory. The official crisis may be said to be over for the present, but the public discontent increases. We have spoken very freely, and, under circumstances, very boldly, on the present state of affairs; and very energetic measures of repression must be taken before long, but the repression should be applied elsewhere than in the official mode to remove discontent and murmuring. The causes which justify it must be radically removed. It has been once said that the public mind resembled that of dull boys — there was no getting anything into it but by repetition. The story of the Reform should be rehearsed again and again until it is understood to be a very useful lesson to the Methodist. It is repulsive, but it must be obtruded on the sensibilities of the people until its importance is understood. The system continues. There is a talk of improvement, but there always has been this kind of talk—unprofitable, because delusive. A great crime has been perpetrated against the people, and the offenders cannot be allowed to escape punishment.

When truth with bright evidence is ready to break in upon an opponent, and to overcome his objections and mistakes, how swift and ready is the mind to engage wit and fancy, craft and subtlety, to cloud and perplex and puzzle the truth, if possible. How eager is he to throw in some impertinent question to divert from the main subject. How swift to take hold of some occasional word, thereby to lead the discourse off from the point in hand. So much afraid is human nature of parting with its errors and being overcome with truth. Just thus a hunted hare calls up all the shifts that nature hath taught her; she treads back her mazes, crosses and confounds her former track, and uses all possible methods to divert the scent when she is in danger of being seized and taken. Let puss practice what nature teaches. But would one imagine that any rational being should take such pains to avoid truth, and to escape the improvement of its understanding? Should the officials be hard pushed, why then they may alight on the old track. Thanks be to the wisdom of the people, we have many instructors. It is the pride of men which is the spring of this evil, and an unwillingness to yield up their own opinions even to be overcome by the truth itself.

The despotism of the press is as dangerous as any other despotism, and therefore it is not a thing to be desired. The press should be free, but the people should be freer. It is the freedom of the public mind that we want. Despotic reviewers who, like sovereigns, can confer honours on their friends and favourities, despotic editors, who can dictate creeds, political or religious, are petty tyrants, incompatible with true liberty. We, therefore, do not want them. It is not as a dictator that the press becomes a blessing to the people. It is only as a collector of facts, an humble and modest reasoner on facts, and a candid and faithful reporter of both sides, or all sides, of the question, that it becomes a healthy and invigorating element of social existence. It is vain, therefore, to expect freedom of the press among mere officials. It is revolutionary and convulsive there, for such a press would immediately attack the official craft, which cannot withstand free discussion. It has been said there are but two things worth living for—to *do* what is worthy of being written; or to *write* what is worthy of being done; and traits of character which you seek to conceal, you had better seek to reform.

This pretension of united official Reformers, subtle and rotten as it is, must be unveiled to the whole of the Methodist people. Every Methodist should learn the history of the rise and progress of the agitation, as a necessary justification of the course he sanctions and upholds. To wage war in ignorance of the cause of it, is not only an error but a crime.

There are some who, while inculcating the necessity of the people's instruction in history, have yet decried the study of politics. Why, what is political wisdom but the application of the wisdom derived from the past to the difficulties of the present? A study of Methodist history and of its politics, so far from being pernicious, is the safeguard of its church. Ignorance on such subjects is the nurse of its errors. An acquaintance with them tends, in times of agitation and difficulty, to produce forbearance for the present and hope for the future The early mismanagement of the agitation seriously impaired the effects of the commendable endurance of our suffering people. The old system of routine broke down in action, the officials failed in their attempt exclusively to perform the work of the church, and the mode of government by official-ships and narrow cliques was shaken to its foundation;

and the time has arrived for unrecognised authority to assert itself. The church is yet in want of true and strong men, men powerful alike in mind and will. A revolution of opinion is taking place; a constitutional and peaceful revolution which has for its aim the task of tearing the command from class officials and of placing it in the hands of legitimate and efficient authority.

The following remarks will generally apply to all of the Methodist churches relative to the conduct of their official members, but there may be occasion especially to apply them to *professed reform* characters.

That Methodists are striving earnestly for the rights and freedom given them of God, and wrested from them by men, is now placed beyond all manner of dispute. Some doubt might have been entertained so long as they stood alone in the field, no foe daring or willing to come out against them, to put in his equal claim, before the unbiassed judges of the contest, to cope with them for the truth dear to them both, not with fleshly arms, but with the weapons of the mind. Until very lately it seems to have been the opinion of the great men who exercise lordship over those numerous churches that it was quite beneath them so much as to acknowledge the existence of any opposition. They were either so blind that they could not see it, or so proud that they would not stoop to notice it, or so fool-hardy as to think their mountain too strong ever to be moved. They have satisfied themselves, hitherto, with a smile at one, a sneer at another, a laugh at a third, with now and then the summary execution of some ringleader of the *disaffected*, in order to strike terror into the fearful, and prevent the spread of the revolutionary spirit. The cuckoo song of unanimity, tranquility, and prosperity, was heard from one end of the land to the other.

What are we to think, by the way, of the sincerity of the men who have, up to the very last hour, uniformly told their congregations that the Connexions never were in a healthier and more flourishing condition than at present, when, lo! at once and on the sudden the cry is raised, from one end of the land to the other, that these self-same Connexions are shaken, shattered, and threatened with final overthrow. Were they aware of the leaven that lay hid in the great mass of meal, and that for years has been working its way, and will work, until the whole be leavened? Did they know that so many

of their brethren and friends were predisposed to receive impressions hostile to the assumption of absolutism, and infallibility on the part of the officials, and did they foresee the speedy coming of events likely to lead to the production of such impressions? If they knew these things (and surely they could not be altogether unacquainted with them) how worse than wicked to declare the Connexions to be peaceful and prosperous? If they did not know them, what a lamentable ignorance does it betray of the souls entrusted to their keeping.

How must these men have forsaken the flock, which they were hired, or appointed to watch and to feed? We deliberately charge them with gross neglect in this important part of their official duty. For some years past they have ceased to be *faithful* officials of the people called Methodist. They have officiated in the chapels, and appeared on the platforms, and presided at financial meetings, and associated with the wealthy, but they have not found their way to the *hearts* of their people. There has been no fellow-feeling betwixt them. The officials have been growing gradually up into a separate and distinct order; and the members have been settling down into the mere machinery which they have worked in the accomplishment of their designs. We have marked the slow but steady progress of this change, with the deepest grief and dread. We knew that such a state of things could not continue long; that a crisis would ultimately arrive, that would astonish and confound the most stout-hearted. But this culpable neglect is not the whole of their official offence. They have systematically opposed every measure for the amendment of the laws and regulations of the church.

We have regarded the question to be *discussed* as one of great delicacy; we have little to do, however, except to look at principles. Names were sometimes things of importance. In commercial connexions we might think it of importance to ask who were the persons connected with, or embarked in it, but, in such matters as concern great principles, we never thought of asking if Mr. such-an-one had his name down, or whether the projector was an esquire or a lord. The question with us was, what was the principle? We have certainly listened to the details of the years of agitation with some degree of pain. We could but see that a storm was lowering over the connexions; but yet we had lifted up our

humble prayer that it might pass over without any injurious effect; that it might purify the connexions; and that the Scriptural liberty which each ought to enjoy might be possessed in harmony by the whole. We have aimed to be impartial. We are friends to free and fair *discussion*: to hearing both sides of a question. On that principle we wish always to act, whether in the church or elsewhere.

If the mountain *will not* go to MAHOMET, why then MAHOMET *must* come to the mountain. There is nothing else for it. So the sooner it be done the better, and with as good a grace as the pretended and humbled prophet can put on. It is a little galling we grant, but it cannot be helped. The magician ought not to have called the credulous crowd around him, and in their sight have commanded the everlasting hill to come and go at his beck and bidding. Such imposters usually become the victims of their own cunning; for the fury of the exasperated dupe is commensurate with his previous folly, and hastens to wreak a late, but most exacting, vengeance upon the head of the hyprocritical deceiver. He who begins by beguiling and overreaching his neighbours, should not complain though he may be amazed when he finds he has ended in deceiving and circumventing himself. The old saying is a true and consolatory one—"Let the devil alone and he will be sure to overshoot his own mark at last." Who has not seen this verified again and again? The overwise and the overrighteous, the knave and a fool in a mask, sooner or later, are detected and despised. Thus in the revolving cycles of virtue and of vice the mystery of Godliness and the mystery of iniquity are at length thrown open, and made fully known to the humble scholar in the school of CHRIST. Few, indeed, and evil must be the days of the years of that man's pilgrimage have been who has not, from the practice of others, as well as from his own experience, been led to believe that, *in the end*, and *on the whole*, if not from first to last, it is safest and best to do what is right, and leave the rest to GOD —to acknowledge Him in all our ways that He may direct our steps.

Now we want to know—we wait to be told—whether in these things there be any difference between individual and corporate, personal and relative, private and public, single and universal action? If there be, where and what is it? Are the principles of truth and goodness, right and holiness, and

love, the same? or are they not the same when you emerge out of social and political existence and engagement? We should say at once that they are the same; that however differently they may be applied, they can never essentially vary, for the word of the LORD is an unchangeable ONE, *and it abideth for ever.*

To say that a man may be very honourable in the transactions of social and civic life, and, at the same time, be concerned in very questionable, if not very nefarious, proceedings, as the member of a committee or of a corporation, may be perfectly correct, it may be the actual fact; but is it perfectly correct, in our estimate of character, to consider him as an upright, virtuous, and honourable *man?* By no means. And hence is the dangerous fallacy so common amongst moralists and political economists. On the contrary, we maintain that if a man be promoting, abetting, or concurrent in any evil deed, he cannot be any longer looked upon as a man of principle or creditable purpose. For what is his membership in such committee, or corporation, other than an office or station, (like that of fathership or townsmanship, which he is said to sustain with so much credit,) the duties of which demand the exercise of peculiar virtues? If he fail in this exercise—if he swerve, or truckle—if he lend himself to uphold an *evil system*, or to defend and perpetuate the *evils in a system* otherwise good—then his character for truth and goodness is gone, quite as completely, quite as *culpably*, as though he refused to pay his tailor's bill, or ill-treated his wife, or suffered his children to wander wild, like the savage sons of the desert.

It is related of Latimer that, when he once preached before the tyrant Henry VIII, he took a plain, straightforward text, and his sermon assailed the very sins for which the monarch was notorious; and he was stung to the quick, for the truth always find a response in the worst man's conscience. He would not bend beneath the authority of his God, and he therefore sent for Latimer, and said, "Your life is in jeopardy if you do not recant all you have said to-day when you preach next Sunday." The trimming courtiers were all anxious to know the consequence of this, and the chapel was crowded. The venerable man took his text, and, after a pause, began with a soliloquy thus—"Now, Hugh Latimer, bethink thee, thou art in the presence of thy earthly monarch, thy life is in his hands, and if thou dost not suit thyself to his fancies, he

will bring down thy grey hairs with blood to the grave; but, Hugh Latimer, bethink thee, thou art in the presence of the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who hath told thee, 'Fear not them that kill the body and then can do no more, but rather fear Him that can kill both body and soul and cast thee into hell for ever!' Yea, I say, Hugh Latimer, fear Him." He then went on, and not only repeated what he had before advanced, but, if possible, enforced it with greater emphasis. What was the consequences? Henry sent for him, and said, "How durst thou insult thy monarch so?" Latimer replied, "I thought if I were unfaithful to my God it would be impossible to be loyal to my king." The king embraced the good old bishop, exclaiming, "And is there yet one man left who is bold and honest enough to tell the truth?"

At present there may be a gentle rippling on the surface of the Connexions only, but there is a tremendous under current, which, at the most suitable opportunity, will not fail to burst forth. The private members of all the Methodist churches are called on to *discuss* those matters between themselves.

We cannot but mistrust the honest exercise of all power by any person, or number of persons, which is not *open* and *responsible*.

A crisis in the affairs of Methodism has undoubtedly arrived. This has been, with signs undeniable, for some time approaching. The people are struggling for reasonable and Scriptural liberty, and the officials are resisting every effort that they make. Methodism is convulsed in almost every part, and the unyielding officials calmly assure *their* confiding and simple friends that all will pass away, and Methodism be none the worse. Suffer a humble character to blow the trumpet, and inform the people that *their cause depends* upon *themselves*. If they be true to the work we have undertaken, which is but being true to themselves, their purposes will be gained; for against *the people* no government, whether civil or ecclesiastical, can ultimately prevail! Methodists! Your petitions, letters, protests, and memorials, in other questions, were put away as an unclean thing! and you were chided for venturing to express, in such a respectful way, your dislike of the conduct of *officials*. Will you say amen to their arbitrary doings, and to the inhuman and satanic exclusions now taking place? or will you urge again and again upon officials its

former errors and its present arbitrary, inquisition-like acts? If you despair of reaching the "paternal ear" by former means, as indeed you well may, then adopt this method—*Keep your money in your pockets, and join the Private Members' Discussion Society!* The local officials have at last forced us to fight our own battles with their own weapons—"Stop the supplies." On this part of the subject we shall have to be explicit as we proceed.

Therefore, complete reform will be more easily, and more speedily effected, than that which by its very moderation encourages the holders of power to resistance. *It is not the business of the reformers to inquire what the officials will grant, but what justice requires.* This is honest, this is manly, this is politic. All concealment of their designs by the reformers is to be deprecated. If they are just, they will advance by discussion. The views which the reformers honestly entertain they should not be ashamed to avow. What they proposed for the benefit of the connexions they should present in full to the judgment of the connexions, and if their schemes are unscriptural and unjust let them fall by their own hollowness.

The very essence of good government is responsibility. The constitution which the joint officials seek to restore, arms the officials with irresponsible power! Why, then, should the Reformers stultify themselves by agitating the whole connexions to accomplish that which would leave the great vice of the system untouched? And why should they seek a thorough reform under the false pretence of being satisfied with what they termed a moderate reform, hoping that the latter would lead to the former, *though they hardly dare give utterance to the hope.* Is this consistent with the courage and manliness of men contending in a just cause? Let the reformers take the frank and open course. Let them state their purpose at the full. Let them leave a tricky, tortuous, insidious policy to the invaders of the people's rights, who entertain purposes they may well be ashamed of. And, if there is force in truth, if the love of justice and liberty has still a place in the minds of Methodists, then the men who use the best means for the accomplishment of the greatest good—we will not say to the Methodist connexions, Englishmen, but MAN in all future generations—shall not labour in vain. Truly, here is an opportunity of doing good, of gaining distinc-

tion above all worldly fame, that might satisfy the most expansive benevolence, the loftiest and purest ambition that ever animated the breast of any benefactor of his species. May men be found befitting the occasion!

Controversy is not in itself desirable; but it may be necessary, and even those who are least inclined to it may feel the "necessity laid upon them," by a paramount sense of duty—duty to truth, duty to God, duty to their erring friends. The God of peace is the God of truth; and there may be a peace which, as the God of truth, he disowns. In the spiritual world, as in the physical, stagnation may be more perilous than tempest. The agitating storm of controversy may at times be requisite, to purify the atmosphere of Zion from its insidulously gathering, and silently death-spreading infectious particles. Everything depends on the tempers of mind in which controversy is conducted; and it should not be forgotten that, while "the meekness and gentleness of Christ" is needful on the one hand, openness to light and conviction is no less indispensible on the other. But what chiefly concerns us in this warfare is the demolition of bad principles, and the establishment of good. We stand upon the principles of eternal justice; we will have nothing to do with patching up the present systems, and will be content with nothing less than their total extinction.

But, why do we spend so much precious time on this subject? Because we feel that church governments require to be stimulated, controlled, and compelled. Meetings like the Private Members Discussion Society are not called together for the purpose of argument, to convince them of what they were thoroughly persuaded before they entered, as incentives to create feelings, which each member expressed within his own sphere; but the grand and primary use of such assemblages, in a free community, is to declare the will, the sovereign, paramount, irresistible will of the people, called Methodist; that the people shall be free, show us the official who may dare to resist that will, or close his ears to that voice. It may be repeated that we are unjust towards officials. In a journal of other days, an able advocate of the cause of reform, it was, in effect, stated that we "were as usual unjust to the officials." We certainly are, "as usual," of those that would not be taken in, that will not take promises for performances, professions for actions, those "as usual" who love to see men

prove their faith by their good works, and who will not be satisfied in seeing gentlemen called liberal, if we see, at the same time, that their conduct is illiberal. And we hope we never will outlive that usage, even for an hour. We know what a state they have got themselves into by their infatuated conduct. We know that they have chosen to break with the friends of reform throughout the connexions; and to give up the constant and important support of their body-guard and best friends—the people, for the loss of which, we apprehend, they will not find an equivalent in that of the official amalgamation. We are not to give up our principles because it pleased an official government, suddenly intoxicated with the favour of their noble order, to shut their eyes to them. We are *not* of those who were ready to take the present official leaders of reform upon trial, in the hope that they would prove better than their predecessors, for every thing we have for years seen in those leaders has, we confess, tended to fill our mind with the greatest apprehension. The dangers we apprehend on the part of officials, is not so much from their conservative members, for they acted according to their principles. One thing, however, we would say of those same lords, who were so much reviled and abused, that we have seen much worse things done by official reformers. From the commencement of the present agitation, these official members, called "liberals," had declared upon the platform, or assented to it when declared for them, that they were friends to freedom, enemies to bondage, and the bitterest opponents of official slavery, yet when they got into power they did nothing for the people, nothing for the private members. The reason, then, that we complain of the reformers, and not so much of the conservatives, or moderates, was, that the latter, though scanty in their professions, fulfilled them. They may be in the wrong, we believe them to be so, but they were at least honest, and did not affect to be better than they really were. We mean that they were politically honest, and we confess that we respect an honest opponent a great deal more than a shuffling reformer. We, however, were opposed to the conservative and moderate parties, because they were for the church systems of Wesley, and that of the "Leaders," by which were meant the stationed officials rather than the Gospel, and the local officials rather than the constitution. They did not make big professions, use high-sounding language

about liberty and the rights of man, and cry aloud for universal, civil, and religious liberty all over the world. They did not do so, for they were afraid that reform would advance too quickly, while we apprehended that it would go too slowly, stand stock still, or, perhaps, what is worse, still go a little backwards. Such were not the creeds of the conference and moderate parties—their creeds were very different; but their opinions were nevertheless faithfully represented and expressed in their assemblies, and that much we could not say for the reform members of the Methodist communities. They did not express the sentiments of the reform constituency of the connexions. At the risk of being called unjust, we would say that they represented quite a different class. They may boast of majorities in the reform cause, and yet support governments in their most illiberal measures. And why did they do so? We would answer the question by telling the private members what feeling it was that they really did represent. They represesented a very strong feeling, cloaked, however, under another phrase, meaning another thing—the fear of an event, of all others the most dreaded, namely, the fear of the stationed officials getting into power. That was exactly the state of the case. If we are wrong they may undeceive us, but, looking both to past and present proceedings, we have a right to say that there was no measure, be it ever so coercive, ever so illiberal, which the governments might propose, which they, the local official members of the connexions, or a great majority of them, were not prepared cheerfully to support. We do not think that the people would be satisfied with such conduct much longer. If a vote of censure were to be moved on the order in council, the "declaration of principle," would any official member vote against it? Whether or no, the people must call on the liberal members to bring forward such a motion, that all those who vote against it might be henceforth known as accomplices in the revival of the official order for the purpose of keeping up official slavery. In due time, the vote of censure, therefore, should be proposed, and let it be seen what official members would vote against it. It would, no doubt, be said that, if they censured the official reformers, they would be voting for the conference, or moderate officials, but we never knew anything coming from them half so bad as that order in council. Very shortly the official reformers may have an opportunity of showing what they would do. They

need not think that they could escape with impunity on such a trial. Let them not listen to the "Leaders' meeting" telling them of the risk of stationed officials coming in, and the peril of local officials going out of power—of the hoplessness of ever again being visited by the cheerful gleams of official duty—power and patronage gone—office out of sight—nothing but opposition hereafter, should they vote for censure on official reformers. Let them not listen to such whisperings as these; for as sure as they did, and voted against the emancipation of the private members, so surely would their people endeavour to put an end to their *official* reform *existence.* But we must hope that despotism in all its forms will be abolished, and that the several Methodist connexions would be induced to follow the example of a real reform movement.

In various reform movements we hear a great deal about principles and measures, which, when weighed in the balance, are found wanting. In the year 1832, the government of the country had declared the reform bill a perfect measure, and that it did not intend to alter it. But since then it has been altered, with not a little to do.

With Methodist reformers there have been a great deal said, and to do, relative to the conference infringement on the "plan of pacification." This has been the great, bitter, and long complaint, because it would be a violation of a solemn compact. As to the compact, we could not respect it as an alleged obligation. Many considered it as lawful, and, if adhered to, binding; but it appeared to us that such a compact was in itself necessarily invalid, and for a simple reason, that it rested on a violation of the established and indestructible rights of humanity, which man did not give, and which no man, or set of men, were entitled to take away. Besides, that compact had not received the consent of the party most deeply interested. It had received the consent of the joint officials, but not of the people. If we were to have but one more measure passed by the Methodist reformers, we would say, let it be one for the emancipation of the private members. We mistake if such a measure would not preserve the popularity of officials, probably recover much of that they had lost, and be looked upon, perhaps, as one of those great acts of charity which hideth a multitude of sins. But the present moderate reformers, so far as we understand them, contend for no more than the basis-less plan of pacification, while the

reformers themselves profess to go beyond. Hence their declaration of principles, regarded as a perfect measure, and which they do not intend to alter.

It is intended to try the reformers by their own declaration of principles; it is the principle that we have to deal with, as a true philosopher invariably pounces upon the thought, and cares but little about the thinker. It is not the workman he is anxious to criticise, but the work. With him the individual is always subordinate to the idea. The man is sunk in the theme. We have now to take notice of one of those essential principles which is become the standing order in the official council, namely,—That the church is to exercise discipline; mark, *either directly* OR *representatively*. This must be the theme of our present remarks; we seize on it with all the talons at our command. We hesitate not to repeat, as our clearest conviction, that that *or* is nothing more nor less than an *official loophole*—a hole to give passage to officials whereby they may exercise despotic power over the private members—a mere *shift* or *evasion* of the subject pretended, that the church is to exercise discipline over its own members, through its officials, as if the whole of its members were present, to fill their place, to personate them as if deputed, delegated, and to act for them; all of which being so *false* in *fact*, as it is *unscriptural* in its *tenor*, and, therefore, unfounded, impossible! consisting with the very scripture therein connected and referred to. In exercising discipline on the members of the church, hath Jesus Christ said tell it to the church, "either directly or representatively?" Do we find it so written in Matt. 15, 18? And yet we find that this is the standing order in the official council—which every true reformer must, and will, as he is bound to do, enter, in the name of Jesus Christ, his most solemn protest against as a piece of *insufferable* officiousness, or something indescribably worse.

Let discipline have to be exercised in the Reform church, the member may be noticed to appear before a "Leaders' meeting," there to be tried and sentenced; but let the member demur to that mode, on the ground that the "Leader's meeting" is not the church, but, then to meet which the officials *or* is brought forward—*or representatively*, the officials standing order, their declaration of principles, a perfect mea-

sure, and by which they must and will abide, at all risks, let the consequences be what they may. See them sticking to their *declaration of principles*, like unto Wesley's successors in office for the *sacred deposit*—they give up their principles for the sake of the private members, indeed!—" no never, a thousand times never," over again. Therefore, it is now that the war is between the officials in general, and the people at large. The accused member objects to the officials *or*, as being unscriptural, as much so, as the Wesleyan system itself. Wesley, " the man of one book," could also quote from that book, viz., *tell it to the church*; but then he must—like unto the official reformers—put his finishing stroke to it, he must give his comment on the text, viz.:—That is, " tell it to the elder or elders." But since Wesley's time, and up to the present period, it is everywhere throughout the various connexions, whether conservative, moderate, or reform, " tell it to the Leaders' meeting." The latter of which, let it be repeated, occupies a connecting position, and that but one step, between the *sublime* and the *ridiculous* in their declaration of principles, " either directly *or representatively*," which is but another phrase for the " Leaders' meeting." And now all this fuss and to do about the "Leaders' meeting" should not one be led to fancy that this was the very " foundation of the Prophets and the Apostles," if not the chief *corner-stone* itself? " Tell it to the Leaders' meeting;" and yet, no such meeting, that we read of in the Bible, nor of a single leader in the New Testament—except, " the blind, leader of the blind." " Oh! but we mean representatively;" but we can allow of no such direct perversion, or of such twisting of words and meaning, at the pleasure of official *caprichio*, while they are only acting on the *ex-officio* principle. It is an official fabrication, a *misrepresentation.*

We do not mean to say but that the appointment of the office of a leader may be a consistent and prudential regulation of the church; but then, the church itself having no authority to act inconsistently with the Scriptures in any case which it might regard as prudential, either directly or representatively, its representation becomes invalid without scriptural sanction, yea, it becomes criminal error to pervert the Scriptures in order to suit its notion to what may be deemed prudential, either directly or representatively. So that the Methodist consenting to the Leaders' meeting being the executive in discipline

in the church, does not prove "the declaration of principles" to be correct scripturally: here we take our stand for uncompromised opposition.

If an individual has entered a society *of a religious character*, formed upon the understood regulations of its members, it is presumed that he approves of them, and a change of opinion with regard to them, would call for a resignation of membership. But if he enter a *religious* society he is bound to put the inquiry at all times of his after life, are the rules and doctrines of this society consistent with the revealed will of God in the Bible? and, if not, to endeavour to bend them to this infallible rule.

It may appear all very fine, and to some persons quite plausible, that the "declaration" goes on to say that the office-bearers are chosen by the church, and, therefore, they must be its representatives, Indeed! as if Leaders may not be chosen by the church for the sole purpose of leading a class, nothing beyond being stated or implied; however, it may be prostituted into a representation as a *cloak* for the exercise of the *ex-officio* principle. In fact it is a repetition or similarity of the old official audaciousness and corruption: "we are to be your judges, but you are not to judge us." And this is the standing order in the reform official council, for which they have been found contending, perhaps more obstinately, if possible, than Wesley himself, the pope of Methodism, or his successive despots and tyrants, against whom those very official reformers have been hurling unmeasured abuse for the last six or seven years. But no matter how ridiculous the carrying out of this *representation* of theirs may be in the eyes of the people, yet, if we mistake not, they will be found to contend for it: they give it up! no never, ten thousand times no never. They having laid down the law for the private members, they will be found enforcing it, right or wrong, scriptural or unscriptural, let the consequences be what it may—reform or no reform—Methodism or no Methodism. And, is the reform come to this passado; we shall be surprised at no official doing, or at its consequences, if the Wesleyan system is already doomed, what must be the end of such professed reform? Shall I not visit for these *things?* saith the Lord.

Really, verily, and truly, we know of nothing in the notorious agitation that has tried our patience more than this said

representative scheme for the government of Methodism, in its separate churches or its connexions.

Not to dwell, for the present, on the amalgamation, which is to be based on the "principles already adopted by the delegates." Mark, it is not a plan for the regulation of the annual assembly, or a district meeting, or even a circut quarterly meeting, where it would be inconvenient for the private members in general to attend; but it is designed to take place at every separate church where there is a Leader's meeting held, and where every private member may as conveniently attend as any official member. But, then, the officials may attempt to get over that fact by inventing, or stating, another stubborn fact, not quite so easily to get over, at least in their own notion, which is,—"That all disciplinary acts, admissions into, and expulsions from, the church, shall be determined by the Leaders' meeting, subject to an appeal to the quarterly meeting, whose decision shall be final." Now, here is a *pretension* to liberality, but what is the *reality?* Nothing more than an appeal from one official meeting to another official meeting. It is "Ask my fellow if I am a thief?" or as an appeal from the Wesleyan district meeting to the conference, "whose decision shall be final." There is one law of regulation for the both meetings, in which all questions are submitted to the (collective pastorate) judgment of office bearers—the sham representatives, which is so insolently boasted of "That all leaders and office bearers shall be chosen, or removed, by the vote of the church, thus securing to the people a representation in the quarterly and other official meetings." Why, every one of the "collective pastorate" was, in the first instance, chosen by the vote of the church in the same way, for the purpose of preaching only, and nothing more; and also, the church has so much to do with the removal of the "pastorate" from office as it has to do with removing an official reformer from office, and that is nothing at all; and, therefore, in effect and fact, the people are so much ignored by the official reformers as by the conference officials. But, then, we private members are a set of incapables, that they are not going to submit to the nuisance of a "mob government," as they are pleased to style us, when their lordships are assembled together. Indeed! So we are regarded by our own leaders, who meet us once a week to instruct, as not being capable of thinking for our-

selves, of speaking for ourselves in a church meeting, or of even of holding up our hands to the innocence or guilt of a brother or sister, who might have been so unfortunate as to offend an official, or to have incurred the displeasure of the "Leaders' meeting." But is all this to the credit of our very leaders? Why have they so neglected their duty towards us? Why do they not afford better instruction, at least inform us that there is "a time to keep silence and a time to *speak*." Yea, verily, why do they not teach us our manners, so that we might be regarded admissible into decent society? Is it because our presence would be an intolerable offence to them, or that "ignorance is the parent of obedience?" or are their motives above our common comprehension? Lo and behold! see a poor brother summoned before a Leaders' meeting for the unpardonable crime of holding, or attending, the "Private Members' Discussion Society," held only for the purpose of enlightening his darkness, that he might be of some trifling use among his brethern; that, if haply, he might become of some little assistance in carrying out the great reform cause itself! and by that Leaders' meeting, for such an offence, excommunicated from the church. Mark, it might be, "without notice and without trial," but not without precedent, that is a *fact*. A precedent for the present race of amalgamated officials in carrying out *their declaration* of *principles*, by the church, forsooth, either directly *or representatively*, that is, either "by hook or by crook" the despot shall be played.

But the fraud being out, we intend to bring the official standing order in council—the declaration of principles—forward, not only for *discussion*, but, in due time and order, for protestation and trial. The officials will then know something of what the incapables, the *mob*, if they will have it, are capable of accomplishing, in spite of their declaration of principles, their standing order in council, which goes to cut up their own declaration—"That Christ is Head over all things to His church, and His word the only and sufficient rule both of its faith and practice," so far as Methodism, as it should be, is concerned—like unto the Wesleyan corruption and ruinous despotism. With a cool determination, truly frightful to all such like officials, we shall proceed. They and their systems shall be known, and be disposed of, the Head of the church being our helper! The doom of God is over this *official craft*.

It has long been in jeopardy. It will soon be brought to naught. The great *Diana* of the Ephesians will fall, as *Dagon* did of yore, before the ark—the ark of the Lord that is lodged in the holy place to be removed no more for ever. Even the reform house is set against it. Can it stand? Would you have it stand? No, no, no. Let every thing be brought low that rears itself up as as a barrier in the highway of truth.

Times are very much changed of late. The high lordships of mere men, like ourselves, can hardly much longer be held up. The blind worship of the unsightly shapes they have raised, so long a pass-token to the *friends*, and a war-whoop for the *foes*, of those who wield its wizard-wand—this *power of the air*, though not quite laid prostrate, is smitten with imbecility, the fore-runner of its inevitable annihilation. There is ONE struggling with the MAN OF SIN, who will destroy his works, and cast out of the house which, for ages, he has kept in peace. Six thousand years ago, this dreadful fight began, when we were driven from the garden, and were doomed to wander in the wilderness but not without the LEADER, whose footsteps mark the way—sometimes rough, but always safe—back again to the Eden we have lost. *Lying leaders* have arisen and have deceived many, to their undoing and to their death. But of the lost, not a few have been found, and of the dead, some have been brought to a newness of life. These are now adding themselves to the true, fast, and chosen band of the LORD'S holy ones, having ground the *golden calf* to dust, and cast its ashes into the waters of oblivion, and have sworn to follow withersoever their living Head may lead them, until they come into the heavenly land. These are the children of light, and as they move onwards the banner over them is Love.

There is a shaking amongst the dry bones. What the *new man* will be who can foretell? Little more has been done as yet than the loosening of the time-worn and crumbling stones of the building made with hands. It does not rest upon the rock but upon the sand. When, and how, it will be overthrown, none can say. It is, however, tottering, and come when, and how, it may, the fall thereof will be great. All things will be proven. That which is good, we trust, and nothing else, will be held fast by ourselves and our followers,

since we have all felt and acknowledged the worse than worthlessness, the hurtfulness and deadly harm, of the things we have forsaken.

The shafts of truth are flying thick and fleet throughout the land, and on every side they are seen to *stick fast* in the hearts of those who foolishly gainsay, or madly gainstand, its heavenly power. As we draw the bow, we pray that each bolt may be carried home. If that bow abide in strength, and we trust it will, thousands will fall on the right hand and on the left. The GOLIATH champion of the mystic Canaanitish Antichrist, at the very height of his pride and self-sufficiency, was death-doomed in the book of GOD, whom he defied; a pebble from the brook the only weapon, and a shepherd boy the only warrior employed by the Lord of hosts to win the uneven fight. True and trustful type of the war in which we are now engaged! We fear not, therefore, what men can do, or strive to do, against us. We shall still hold on, and hope to the end. And the Scripture, in solemn tone, emphatically avers, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might." *Individual* exertion at the present momentous crisis appears particularly necessary. Every one should be at his post, every one should be up and doing.

Everything is beautiful in its season. Hence saith the wise man, "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven. A time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted. A time to break down, and a time to build up. A time to weep, and a time to laugh. A time to keep silence, and a time to speak. A time to love, and a time to hate. A time of war, and a time of peace." Thus we perceive that even hatred has its mission as a moral principle.

It is a prevailiug habit in common conversation to speak of hatred as an absolute evil, and of love as an absolute good; and one might logically conclude, from the tone and character of such language, that society would be fortunate if hatred could be totally suppressed, and love for ever established as the absolute monarch. But hatred is as purely moral in its character as love itself; and love is not only immoral in many of its aspects, but is sometimes actually regarded by the common consent of society as a vice. To love what is evil is tantamount, in depravity, to hating what is good. Imposters in criticism find faults where none are to be found, and are un-

able to perceive those which really exist. Determined to condemn, they judge beforehand, and make use of what natural sharpness they possess to look out for faults to justify and confirm their judgment. Fortunately, for the cause of honesty and truth, such critics are not always, nay, rarely, able to discover genuine errors, and, therefore, only expose their own insincerity, ignorance, or want of candour, by making fictitious ones. This may be called the vice of hatred; for it is hatred, without a just cause, overruling justice and distorting truth, to gratify a malevolent feeling which ought rather to be suppressed. In like manner the justification of error, for the sake of gratifying a friendly feeling, is a perversion of justice, yet not only very generally practised, but even regarded by many as an amiable habit, and flatterers and pleasant people study the art as an elegant and fashionable accomplishment.

But legitimate hatred of bad habits and customs is the main source of all improvement. It comes always before the love of good habits; for it is ordained that the evil come first, in order to be subdued and superseded by the good, and we must ever be dissatisfied with what comes first before we endeavour to find a substitute. As a moral principle, therefore, hatred of evil occupies the very first place, it is the very root of progress.

Hence it follows that an age of progress is a fault-finding, critical age, and all great reformations must begin with dissatisfaction, grumbling, and condemnation. A people that are not grumbling are standing still. Such a people, most probably, the Methodists are. They are, comparatively, satisfied with themselves, and their hatred of prevailing habits and customs cannot be strong. But with us genuine reformers, on the contrary, hatreds are excessive in every department of Methodist government as at present existing and practised. We hate the very mode of representing facts and employing arguments. From this intensity of feeling proceeds that zeal which supplies all the ammunition and artillery for social controversy. Were it not for hatred zeal would be cold, and controversy inefficient—a prevalent evil would be an established evil, and a system once set up would be a system for eternity.

It is evident from this that hatred, like any other passion in human nature, may be virtuous or vicious, right or wrong. It

is not an absolute evil in itself, it is only evil when directed towards good. If the man's taste be morally just, and his judgment logically correct, then his hatred is moral and justifiable, and can only be condemned for its amount and the means which it employs to gratify itself.

All great propogandists are strong haters; how else could they find their zeal? We cannot imagine a zeal for knowledge without a hatred for ignorance, nor a hatred for ignorance without a hatred of those who defend and maintain it. But hatred of ignorance does not imply a hatred of the ignorant, provided they be willing to learn. It is love that is developed invariably towards them, and that in proportion to the hatred we experience of the evil that is in them. So it is with heresy; so it is with erroneous doctrine of every description, including church government. But in proportion as we hate it, we hate the state of mind in those who abet it; and not unfrequently the entire persons themselves, making the whole man do penance for the one sin of the judgment. Those who hate little, do little in controversy. They are of little or no use for either side; they are not to be depended on; they will sometimes even acknowledge the weight of an adversary's argument, the truth of his facts, the honesty or sincerity of his mind, and the goodness of his heart. The genuine hater and zealot never condescends to such gentleness of manner. He condemns his opponent in *toto*—pursues him like a fox, worries him like a terrier, treats his talents as an intellectual disease, his pretentions to honesty and sincerity as imposture, and is satisfied with nothing less than his total discomfiture. Such a man is a man of war, a man of spirit, and such a man commands the ammunitions of war, for he speaks to the heart and the feelings of men like himself whose passions are similarly excited and directed. Were this man's judgment perfectly correct, were he in possession of the whole truth, and were his opponents in possession of the whole error, then his hatred would prove a saviour for the church and the world. But supposing him wrong, or partly wrong, and who is not? then this indiscriminate hatred of men and principles is not a hatred of that which is evil, but a hatred of something that is evil and much that is good.

There are some subjects of hatred that make up so much of a man's character, that the whole man becomes identified with them; they are not so much a part of the man as the

man himself. Subjects of religion, politics, or caste, are of of this description; they pervert a man's judgment so thoroughly, and so completely, that those who are ranged on the opposite side are almost justified in hating the entire man provided their own judgments are not equally warped. It is usually because of such differences that men hate at first sight, altogether independent of personal manners. Such hatreds exist amongst rival parties, tribes, and nations. Even now it may be witnessed in Methodism amongst those who encourage their prejudices. The Wesleyans are almost universally disliked by the other sections; and we have heard reformers express this dislike as bitterly as if they had never breathed any other atmosphere but that of the reform. Such men would almost swear a crusade against the Wesleyans, did the times permit. They would visit the sins of the fathers upon the children; and avenge the cruelties of a former age by reviving them in this. Such a spirit is a relic of barbarism, and has no obvious meaning but revenge. A religious hatred is much more justifiable however intense. Indeed, when accompanied with personal faith and piety, there is no hatred more respectable or justifiable than the religious hatred, however erroneous the judgment which directs it.

Were the sum total of human hatred wisely directed, first to the primary cause of social evil in doctrine, and afterward to their consequences in habits and customs, how very soon might the whole mystery of iniquity be destroyed? It is hatred that will do it. Hatred, the great and the legitimate persecutor. But to do it well, it must do it wisely; and to do it wisely, it must first convince the judgment and carry captive the will. By the will of man alone can any real reformation be effected. Whatever is done in opposition to the will, like some revolutions, is again undone. Reform is not real if it do not begin within, and develope itself outwardly. To change the position of things will not improve the morals of a church, or restore the fellowship that has been destroyed. It is the will that must be changed; and that when corrected, all other good effects will follow. When we all hate the same evils, they will flee before us; but when one loves an evil and another hates it, the church will wag on as heretofore, a scene of conflicting elements.

David expresses a holy hatred of the society of certain characters. "I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them

mine enemies." So we see a faithful servant hath the same enemies with his master, whose cause and honour he is, upon all occasions, in duty bound to support and maintain. That a good man hates, as God himself does, not the persons of men, but their sins; not what God made them, but what they have made themselves—especially in the sin of hypocrisy.

"Declaration of principles," indeed! amalgamation, indeed! and in very deed they shall be dealt with!

The contemplation of an amalgamation of the Wesleyan Methodist Reformers with the Wesleyan Methodist Association, has lead us to express ourselves in the strongest terms; and to which we give prominence as a warning against the utmost danger on account of its deception and treachery.

Several considerations may have caused us to hesitate before engaging in such a war; but since we have at last engaged in it, the people must not think us so inconceivably mad as that we would stop short of breaking down for ever the danger of the Association alliance coalition against themselves; because it is obvious that if this struggle has to end with conference only scorched, and its companions in corruption left unhurt, nothing more sure than that Association alliance will but have added the coals of insult to the fire of hate; and that such an alliance will combine all its power for an attack on the people, at the earliest possible opportunity, to the last degree *perfidious*. Here is a degradation deeper and deeper still. We are to be saved by such amalgamation, and the Association is to give the signal and take the initiative.

An amalgamation of two base metals can never produce more than one counterfeit, therefore, as such we shall deal with it.

Justice has no more solemn duty than in rending the mask from the features of hypocrisy: unveiling its deformity, and bring the truth to light.

But it is of no use to hang on the past, except it be for deriving instruction for the future from it.

There is nothing more desirable than that perfect harmony and mutual confidence should exist between allies. But shall this be the case, shall the alliance of professed friends not prove more dangerous to the independence of the people than the greedy ambition of an unscrupulous enemy might possibly have proved? Allies they must show themselves to be, and

not pretentious masters. In Methodism it would be absolute suicide to submit to it.

Let those who, with fore-stalling mind, are apt to comprehend the church-wide bearing of these machinations, let them but ponder over the contents of the compact, let them calculate the subtle plan of the reciprocal operation of the different articles—all tending to make the official influence omnipotent, to reduce the people's power to a blind subserviency to its ambitious aims, to proscribe the liberty of conscience, to obscure all light, to eradicate all independence, to undermine every foundation of the church, and to lay entire churches hand and feet bound on the torture-bed of official ambition and insatiable despotism—and then let the contents of the diabolical pact be compared with the Christian's charter. Has that book been gaged? It is on this they rely. Think of the result if allowed to take effect. But something they forgot; the Word of God is not bound, the Methodist people have the Bible. The lover of truth has a heart to love freedom and the church of his choice; an immortal soul to feel his dignity, and hence he has a stout arm undaunted and brave. *There* is hope!

But how long, oh Lord! how long.

Those officials may find themselves ere long rudely awakened, when the people themselves are fairly merged out of their Methodistical childhood. The image stands eternally between us and mere officials, and separates us by an immeasurable interval from their courts. We swear against them in the name of our Methodism, amid the victims that have fallen by them, and are about to fall, everlasting hatred.

As to puting an end to the mushroom sway of the ***united*** officials, the church has certainly but to will, and it is done. She wants but to "arise and shake them from her," like as the ocean "dashes man shivering in its playful spray" to the rocks. Conquer her freedom she can; to maintain it she wants to see all other churches in Methodism free and secure like herself.

What that Association occupation is may be guessed from the fact that the powerless members have been driven to material resistance by desperation; and that, in amends for the nameless sufferings and outrages they had to endure, their church was put under official law. Pass not lightly over that idea

ye Methodist reformers! Whatever be the danger overshadowing your future from the fatal impolicy of your would-be governors, drifted to and fro from fear, thank the Almighty you do not yet know what it is to be subject and bound to such a law, and Association official law besides! Ye know it, oh, our brethren, prostrate! but, thank God, not broken nor bent. Ye know it, Leaders' meeting, Circuit meeting, Annual Assembly! Ye know it, and will mind it, when the hour of retribution once strikes. Poor brethern! The Wesleyans are despots and ambitious, and that is bad enough. The Wesleyan Association are the same, but they are false and treacherous besides. That is the difference. Wesleyan despotism resembles the bold violence of a highwayman. Wesleyan Association despotism resembles the miserable business of a pickpocket, who occasionally gives a stab from behind.

Relative to this amalgamation, as a whole, we really apprehend we feel rather inclined to look at it as at a very instructive example for non-imitation. We are strangely mistaken, or else no Methodist church on earth in all futurity will cut a pattern after this amalgamation government of Methodist Reform, provided the unwarrantable authority of official Reform dictation does not silence their understanding and fetter their free will.

We think not lightly of the affair, so as to compare it to a "mountain in labour and out creeps a mouse," when the mountain may contain a ruinous volcano, ready to burst out whenever the train may be set on fire. But yet, for the consequence, we should regard it as a ridiculously trifling job. For after the long and painful labour of the mountain has subsided at length, the throes of agony which had convulsed the whole of the Reform movement from east to west, from north to south, had all ceased beneath the hands of the Great Operators, and the little mouse, after issuing forth trembling and ashamed from the parent bosom, had scoured back to hide its shivering nakedness amid the nothingness from which it sprung! No greater mystification was ever practised upon an expectant people, even by immortal jugglers, than the monster hoax to which the Methodist people of Reform were convened from time to time to witness the great Reform performance of amalgamation.

The worst of the matter is, that there appears to be absolutely no chance for the better; because those who take the

lead are so successful in mystifying the people by continual misrepresentation, that we grieve to say the immense majority of the Methodist people absolutely do not understand either the nature of the case or its bearing, consequently, having no touchstone to test the justice of the course pursued, and the aptitude of the measures resorted to, they have no adequate perception of the danger and disgrace to which the movement is drifting.

It is only by this want of exact comprehension, and by the indifference naturally resulting therefrom, we can explain the strange fact that we see the Methodist people more excited at what some parties style "popping the question"—the amalgamation—than by all the injurious shortcomings of their Reform policy with regard to the protracted struggle, though these shortcomings are actually undermining its position, and virtually ruining its future security.

It is not an individual opinion that we advance. It is a fact. It is public opinion widely spread, that could not fail to result, has actually resulted, on the one hand, from the utter inability, or deliberate selfishness, with which the Reform is steered on this momentous occasion towards "sham, snare, delusion, and disgrace;" on the other hand, from the drowsy heedlessness with which the people in general accept every mystification, endorse the greatest misrepresentations, and submit to every calamity without even so much as to take the pains to investigate whether it be a dire necessity to which they must submit with resignation, or, perhaps, the mischievous result of official misrule and impolicy. The evil, in our opinion, originates in the fact that the standard of church intelligence is astoundingly low in the Methodist community with reference to Reform matters and church polity. The future freedom of Methodism depends no longer on the breath of your *officials*. Their mask has fallen, they are known, and, since known, they are neither trusted nor feared. But the people should mind to precise their object, and to define their aim, as well as the officials, whose object is to prevent the cause of freedom from turning the occasion to profitable account, and to patch up the difficulties with increased security to despotism, and with as little injury to the power of *officials* as possible. But we are perfectly convinced that the Methodist people are not satisfied with such an object; and if they submit to it, they do so from not understanding the exact

nature of the question. And since this still remains to be done, and if they desire to preserve their Methodism from ruin, let them organise extensively in every church, every circuit, every district, and into an annual connexion *Discussion Society*, and try to rouse the energies of the Methodist people by conveying light to the connexional mind. If that does not save us, nothing will. The precarious and desultory operations of journalism do not answer the emergency, it never will, especially when mixed up with church officials.

We have not thought it worth while to make any formal appeal to the officials in Methodism, entreating them to concede the just rights of the people, first, because the people's rights are not the officials' to give; and, second, because we know we might as well sing a song in the ears of a dead ass, or a hundred asses, living or dead. Did they imagine that we, who bear the image of God as well as themselves, are incapable of drawing conclusions from given premises. Are we to be amused with their pretended love to us, while at the same time they consider us as beasts, to be subdued, and saddled, and ridden, and slaughtered at pleasure. The sentiment is no less true because it may be termed "vulgar." Eternal disgrace to such, we write advisedly from experience. We cannot reply to official accusation, because, if they are not unworthy of them they are unworthy of us. We cannot appeal to their better nature, because that which they have exhibited is their best, and anger and contempt would be alike thrown away upon them. Yet we, as members, despise them as only members *can* despise those who pretend to a higher responsibility, and a more elevated nature, and a stronger will, disgrace the name of manhood by their imbecility, and their low base use of the small power that lies in their position and not in themselves. We part. We do part! We never grant anybody the right of dragging us to the bar to answer accusations which we despise, and accusers who are not worth our notice.

In proportion as criticism grows smarter, suspicion will grow stronger.

The magnetic needle from a law of nature points to north and south. If the mariner, taking advice from this law, confines himself to studying the rules of nice declination resulting from the difference of latitudes, he has a sure guide on the ocean's wide plains; but if, with blind obstinacy, he either

scorns the indication of his faithful guide, or prides himself in the task of forcing the needle to unnatural deviations, he will see his vessel at the mercy of the waves, and in a wreck, but neither will he have altered the laws of nature or made them ply to his fancy.

Just so in church polity. History points out with fatal imperiousness the necessity of a certain policy in a given case. Follow the inexorable dictate and you will succeed. Scorn the dictate, bend your mind on breaking the concatenation of cause and effect, try to reverse the laws of church polity, affinities, and contrarites, and you must fail—the logic of history will vindicate its authority on the ruins of your fallen pride. Nothing can make up for the evil of an ill-chosen policy. Some parties forget that this struggle is a necessity matured by the events of a hundred years. Others mistake an accidental occasion for an ordinary cause. Both disregard the essential consideration that there is a great historical problem involved in this church conflict.

There are many persons who have amused and instructed, in their way, the public for years, who have never once, scripturally, referred to the religious idea of an overruling Providence in the church as one that was necessary for its right and safe government. In treating of history, "The "Spirit of the Age" is sometimes introduced as a new mythological deity, not much unlike the divinities of the ancient Pagan world; a Luther, a Calvin, a Knox, a Penn, a Wesley; and men write histories of mind and church progress, and refer for the great changes which take place in church matters to individual genius, and thus collect a host of gods who are the great historical leaders and rulers of churches, above whom we see none, unless we transcend the philosophy of the writer, and scale alone those empyreal heights where he has not faith or exaltation to lead us.

From which it follows that readers and listeners to such a mode of instruction grow up to manhood with minds that are disciplined not to look at church movements as if they were conducted or superintended behind the curtain by a celestial intelligence, but as if they were at the mercy of obscure chance and the truth or error of influential fellow-creatures.

We do not call this Atheism, for in it God is partially acknowledged in some of the speculative truths of Scripture. But we do not hesitate to term it a species of God-dishonour-

ing and ruinous infidelity, where the sacred milk of the Word is diluted into a species of milk and water by such partisans; or they curdle the milk, and sour it with uncharitable and sectarian feeling, which is equally infidel and irreligious. For sectarianism that can see God on one side and no God on the other, merely teaches its disciples that if they may live and thrive without God's government in and of the church, they may do the same with respect to His doctrine, and at last the conclusion starts involuntarily upon the mind that this is positive Deism.

Men may submit to superior force, from momentary necessity; but, as sure as their is a God above us, he will never acquiesce in it, and will break his fetters, and re-vindicate the right.

Providence is never at a loss for means to effect its designs, even confusion is God's order. "Let us go down," saith the Lord, "and confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."

Is it not grieviously strange that Methodism should have fallen under the visitation of this curse? Yet such is literally the fact. We do not know that such an utter confusion of ideas has ever prevailed with any people since the confusion at Babel, as is the case with Methodism now.

Well may its people pray, "God save us all," because the words of the National Anthem, "confound their politics," have come home with full weight on their own heads.

That position implies such a contact of reciprocal relations, that between powers so situated there must necessarily be either friendship or enmity—either alliance or antagonism, anything except indifference, that is impossible.

If the same actions may proceed from different principles, it must be always a hazardous, and often an unjust, attempt to assign the true motives of men's conduct; but public actions fall under public notice, and they deserve censure or commendation, according to the obvious good or evil which they produce in society.

It is strange to observe how soon the excitement of the agitation has subsided into a dull dead calm, bordering on absolute unconcern, all fresh as it is with the interest of novelty.

The key to this strange fact is to be found in the circumstance that it gives no answer to the great question which our

times have put forth; it solves no polity problem, decides no controversy, and presents no issue.

In fact, the most important result of that agitation is, that the struggle between the official governments and the people is now indefinitely, inevitably, prolonged, without assuming the character of such a controversy of principles as could warm the heart of churches.

If this be the most important result of the late agitation, the most important result from that result is this, in what manner is the protracted struggle likely to affect the great problem of the next future of the Methodist churches, which, with the feverish agitation of recurring life, shakes the winding-sheet thrown by the imperious hand of tyranny over the oppressed people.

Methodists in general know very little of the political condition of the Connexions. Little habituated to form a true estimate of connexional affairs, they rest satisfied with the delusions of the glittering surface; and are only too apt to overlook, or at the best, to underrate those elements which in the course of events are manifestly destined to have the last word in these complaints whosoever may have had the first.

Before all, it is necessary to establish two fundamental facts.

The first is this, that the condition of Methodism is evidently such as to render a universal revolution inevitable. To ignore this is blindness, to deny it is madness.

The second fact is, that the character of this revolutionary condition is essentially Christian republican.

We will not dwell on the general current of ideas, which, even when bent on some fallacy, has in all history proved to be irresistible; how far more irresistible must it be when—as is the case in this instance—that general current of ideas is the result of the inextricable laws of progress, and of many a dearly-bought experience, that dispelled the illusions of the possibility of a secure compromise between principles so diametrically opposite, as officials and the people's self-government. Proof of it, the actual condition of Methodism everywhere.

Methodism must have freedom, and, therefore, having cast off the officials, in spite of the coalition of officials, it cannot continue the domain of any of all usurpers. Only think, the 1857 an ultimate result of 1797. Why? There is such a

revolting vulgarity, such an impious mockery in the very thought, that it makes one blush. The future of Methodism with a rising generation full of life, with the powerful sentiment of manly expansion under oppression, like as the palm tree grows best under a load. The Methodist people knowing that they *must* have a future, and, therefore, determined to conquer it; the people, proud of the knowledge that their position assigns to them the post of honour, as an advanced guard to that post; the people, conscious of their strength, and of the crime-worn weakness of the official enemy. Methodism has not only a church existence to conquer, but has to secure it from the recurrence of such heart-revolting, unparalleled treason as it had experienced from official Reformers; with their past struggles and their present undying rage, with their grief, and with the daily curse on treacherous officials—upon which their children had been fed, until they have grown men panting for action, if not revenge. Methodism, after the unpardonable offence under which it is suffering still, could not, under any circumstances, reconcile itself to official authority; and that the strength of the people depends on the identity of principles animating them, you will need be convinced that Methodism, must be, in its tendencies, republican. Foreign support naturally implies the resignation of independence, unless it be founded on a lasting *solidity* of reciprocal assistance—which is only possible on the basis of a confederation with churches, never on the uncertain basis of changing officials. The movement of Methodism regeneration must essentially be republican, or it is still-born.

Thus do all the special circumstances of every church in Methodism answer the general current of ideas, resuming the tendency of the deep under-ground movement in these words —*liberty for all, solidity of all, secured by federative churches,*

Now, all the official talk about reform is but a political pretext, blended with hypocrisy; they care not an iota about the rights of the people, except so far as the word may serve their politics, neither have good or bad government, progress or stagnation, reform or conservatism in Methodism, anything to do with it. The problem simply is to secure the authority of local officials from the danger of absorption or partition by such stationed officials as would by this accession become dangerously preponderate. This is the question, and this alone. This once solved, the condition of Methodist official reform ceases to be the people's

question. Whether there be peace or convulsions, progress or decay—whether the Methodist people develope its vitality or not—we trust they may, provided they get relieved from the undue interference of officials and other meddling adherents. Whether Methodism remains as it is, or undergoes a change into confederate sections, or gets decomposed in several independent churches; all these and similar contingencies can in no way affect the general political interests of Methodism, if only the danger of absorption from officials be removed.

Therefore, the people taking a plain view of a plain case, are reasoning thus. To arrive at the solution of the problem the political preponderence of united officials has to be broken, by reducing their power to harmless proportions. This can only be effected by attacking officials by the people, it is therefore reasonable to expect that the *real* Reformers will call the people to an active co-operation, or else they must sacrifice their aim in this struggle. The stronger in means is the stronger in command. It is clear that officials will follow where officials will lead. Besides, of the public manifestations the people of Methodism have honoured the cause of freedom; but they did not sufficiently understand that the people of Methodism is one thing, and the official government is another thing. They really had the illusion that officials would be glad to see Methodism free. It is strange, but they had that illusion, poor creatures as they are! It is passed now. But they had it once. For such is the nature of man that they hate more the yoke actually weighing on their necks, than fear what may loom in the future. It is the natnre of the human heart that while one relies on foreign support, one does not much exert one's own energies. History may regret the fact; but will find an excuse for it in the circumstances that, with Methodism, revolution means war indeed, and such a war is connected with so many sufferings and disagreeables, that we dare not blame the churches for the desire to have the road smoothed, and the chances bettered, by an alliance with some such government, the organised means of which, drawn up in the first rank might give them the benefit of time for an organic development of their own forces. The wish was father to the expectation, and the expectation caused them to pause in their own exertions.

Thus has been the tendency of our times affected by ex-

pectations raised by the struggle. But the cloud of illusion has passed. The nightmare of expectation is removed. Men are themselves again. "Help thyself and God will help thee" is the motto of the church.

We have a public duty to perform towards the people. It is to arouse them to a sense of their position—to the power and ambition of officials, so incompatible with the people's rights and future security, that they would be the most silly of mortals if they were to lay aside the struggle until the power of officials was reduced to proportions of harmlessness to their liberties. That, in fact, the official members appear to be bent on running a race of competition in manifesting their contempt for the noblest aspirations of the oppressed people, and showing which of them could give a bitter insult to the roused, whom, with strange fatality, they mistook for as good as dead.

Whosoever, unblinded by the trembling passion of momentary expediency, penetrates to the bottom of facts as they are, whilst the votaries of the passing moment grasp at the loose straw on the surface, must feel convinced of the fact that it is utterly impossible for the artificial compound of official despotism to withstand, in the long run, the imperishable vitality of people having the will to be free. And who is it that could dare to question that Methodists have that will? Let him question it, and we will hold up the mirror of church history before his eyes, make him blush, if he is capable of it, at the reflection of his ignorance. Man may loose the better part of his soul under the despotic influence of slavery, and the Divine flame of freedom's aspirations may get reduced by oppression to a mere spark of unconscious instinct. Yet that spark is immortal, like Him that planted it there. Not all the insults of official excommunication—not all the mischievous devices of their craft—can ever extinguish it. And those who insult the oppressed with their mediations, and amalgamations, they speculate on its extinction in the Methodist. They may exhaust all their means and influence in propping up despotism, such is their deliberate policy, as it appears they will as soon reverse the current of the tide as prevent the freedom of the people. They may lengthen the days of our struggle, aggravate our position, and increase our disappointment; but as to the ultimate triumph of our Methodistical regeneration, we defy all the combined power of officials and of their adherents to

prevent it. Churches are immortal, and so long as there is a living church they long for freedom. They will strive for freedom; and though they may commit mistakes, and meet disappointments, they will gather new strength from every fall and march on to freedom's ultimate victory. The question is not *whether*—it is only *when?*

Every enlightened Reformer, and every lover of Methodism, can but rejoice at seeing the uncorrupted masses of the Methodist people aroused to take an interest in the great Connexional concerns. Would it had happened earlier, Methodism were now not in the rueful maze it is in. If the people do not save Methodism, Methodism is lost. But it is very much to be regretted that until now the popular demonstrations have been afloat without any connexional and comprehensive positivity for aim. What ought to be done? What policy ought to be adopted? Taking matters not as they should have been, but as they are, we never yet were able to learn from the various speeches and writings a *positive* opinion. "Impeach the Conference." That's all. Very well; but we, for ourselves, feel quite assured of this, that a mere negative assult will never beat an enemy. If you want to dislodge the Conference from its seat of power, oppose a positive policy to its policy. Let it be declared by the people's voice *what is* the way Methodism *government shall go.* Then, this once firmly established, choose your own men, not on personal antagonism, but on this established policy. Pledge them to it, identify them with it, and depend upon it you will make them in a short space of time a power too strong for the stationed and local officials, and all their tribe together. But with mere strictures on what they have done, with censorious arguments bearing on the past, without an advice bearing on the future, they will pooh, pooh your attacks all the time you may yet live, just as they have pooh, poohed you for some sixty years past. A mere personal issue never yet did save a church; it deprives the best part of your arguments by the mere odium of mere personality. A negative banner never yet rallied a party to good purpose. Politics are not a law suit. Raise the banner of positive principles, and men of opposite principles may be buried under its folds. Attack *men* in politics, and whether they stand or fall, their principles will remain. It is the stationed officials in exchange for the local and stationed officials conjointly.

The Methodist people are, as yet, comparatively novices in the mystery of official dealing, who leave us to grope, as every person must do who cannot see, and then they wonder if we go wrong sometimes. We feel that we have yet much to live for. We feel as though some evil threatened us; as though we were about to be parted, not in any ordinary way, but as if for time and for eternity, some impassable gulph were about to divide our very souls. You may think this only an imagination; it may be so, but it is not the less insupportable. O, Methodism, are thy very officers to be the cause of thy doom? We will not despair. The love that gives its spirit to life and its energy to purpose, is beating in our hearts as of old, shining as a fixed star above the wreck of many hopes.

So long as Reform meant the conservation of the official position and privileges at the expense of the rest of the church community, this was a plain, straightforward affair; but popular government might prove a hazardous experiment. So thought the officials; but popular government was not the result of the changes they so long endeavoured to obstruct. A people can only rule through opinion; and stationed and local official corruptionists soon found that the Methodist people only took the trouble to form opinions upon a few subjects. How to humour them upon such occasions, and make use of them upon others, became the problem of the officials. The officials took pains to make that Reform as great a delusion as possible: a delusion, if the people fancied that it made them the chief power in the church; not that the people ever trusted officials, but they had no decided opinion either way, and suffered themselves to be misled. In all these cases we see a want of knowledge and a want of thought. But, without knowledge and without thought, where is opinion—the opinion which is to rule?

If you tell a brother he does not understand church polity he is apt to be terribly offended; yet in what is church polity more comprehensible without study than the theory of any art or species of knowledge? A man does not understand church polity because he has learnt to *talk rather fast*, and because he has been favoured to hear and see *officials* to talk and write loud and long on the subject. All church polity worth having is the result of knowledge and study, and how little of this do we find in the Methodist people. Opinion is, indeed, a strong thing; but crude, idle, unorganised notions

do not deserve the name. When the people really form opinions they will prevail, but not before. Therefore, we are anxious to see the people take a step in the right direction. *Movement* we cannot call it until we see it move, and what is their difficulty? Not the strength of the official parties or factions, for that strength is only negative, and lies in the ignorance of the people, but themselves. They are their own difficulty, and must conquer themselves before they can conquer the abuses of the church. We repeat it, if they do succeed they must conquer themselves, as well as that official party which they inconsistently look up to.

The officials, of course, will only taunt and sneer at the suggestion. However, it may be done at last, and after it is done the light bursts on a sudden upon our Israel. They are struck with the necessity, the advantage, the prudence, and the facility of the operation. They confess it to be astonishing that the project was not thought of long since, and they acknowledge it is only now the siege of official stronghold begins.

Thus far we have nothing to gainsay. A conversion, though late, is better than none But it must be carried out! or a disgraceful subserviency to officials will and must be *useless* and *ruinous*.

We ask again, how *not* to beat such an enemy? Beat! yes, the prospects bid fair at last. Dearly bought though it be, may the laurel not slip from your hands. Methodist people, beware! Let big words of Reform and Amalgamation mystification not impose on sound common sense. Once and again the profit of victory has been wantonly thrown away. Official treachery reaps what the people's heroism has sown. Great is the opportunity and great are the fruits that Providence brought within the reach of your hands. To whom much is given much is due. There is no folly greater than to engage in a struggle, will victory, but not to will it profitably. Be not content with checking official despots, when you have it in your power to break their strength. Conventional Reform is but a check; it does not "take away strength," and a check is worse than nothing. If you check officials, but do not break their strength, then, indeed, the hair of the youngest of our people may grow gray before he will see the end of this struggle, or you will leave your children a task, terrible and dangerous, and they will have to think lightly indeed of your memory for

not having had the resolution to do what you ought and what you could do. Cease from man! There is the whole of the mystery. Despotism must be visited by the people in their strength, not the people in their weakness. We may have plans proposed to us, but what can weakness do with a plan? But what matter the heroism and valour of our people, if we have a bad policy. Propound a good policy with the thunder of a people's sovereign will, and you shall have a good government. If not, your opposition is a mere frog-and-mouse war—what ado about nothing. A mere cant about opinions being free, if there is not freedom in carrying them out—in acting on them without restraint.

We are fully and painfully convinced that it is not all church government or any other outward form which causes the present agitation and division, but that God himself has a controversy with us as a body. We want the power of religion among ourselves. This alone can perpetuate the union of love, and then all things would be done in peace and harmony.

How closely do these words of the Prophet Jeremiah apply to us as a people: "Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding: which have eyes, and see not, which have ears, and hear not: Fear ye not me? saith the Lord will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand *for* the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it? But this people hath a revolting and rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone. For among my people are found wicked men: they lay wait, as he that setteth snares; they set a trap, they catch men: yea, they overpass the deeds of the wicked. Shall I not visit for these *things*? saith the Lord: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this? A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love *to have it so*: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" *A wonderful and horrible thing is committed.* So stupendous a crime, that it is beyond the apprehension of man to conceive, much more to express its greatness; and so abominable, that a man ought even to loathe the thought of it, and which aggravates the greatness of the wonder that such a thing should exist in such a land as *this—The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means;* they agree to speak pleasing

things to the people, thereby to keep up their interest and authority with them. *And my people love to have it so.* They are well enough pleased to be thus misled. If the priests will let them alone in their sins, they will give them no disdisturbance in theirs. They love to be held and governed by a loose rein, and like those rulers very well that will not restrain their folly, and those teachers that will not reprove them. Such people's sins deserved to be punished with such priests, and such priests have helped to make the people thus wicked. And they agree to support each other. "And there shall be like people, like priests: and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them their doings." *Let* the potsherd *strive* with the potsherds of the earth, but woe unto him that striveth with his Maker!

It is with such like parties that the *real* reformers have to contend; and to contend successfully they will need to have the wisdom of a serpent and the harmlessness of a dove. Patience should be exercised towards them; the people should be reasoned with. The invitation to *them* should be,—*Come, let us reason together.* Their attention must be drawn to the responsibility and interest of every individual member of the church. The people really want information on these important subjects—the ignorance of a great portion of the people causing a baneful indifference to their own responsibility and interest in church matters, is a painful fact.

The people must be informed that *they* will be held responsible unto God, for the maintenance of the purity of the character of the Christian ministry among themselves. That they, as individuals, will have to render an account, not only of their own conduct generally, but in particular of the doctrine which is preached, and of the government exercised in the churches of which they are members. That it becomes their province to see to it, that all church matters are to be ordered and defended in accordance with Divine Scriptures.

That, more or less, according to the ability, and opportunity afforded, every individual will have to render an account unto God for his conduct relative to the church he is called, in the Providence of God, to be a member. This has the tendency of awakening attention; and in order to fix and rivet that attention on the individual mind, the how and the wherefore should be explained, and impressed, and

forced home. Of course, in doing which, there will be distinctions, but there must be no exceptions or exclusions. For, according to the ability which a man hath, and not which he hath not, will be the requirement. Then, there are, or should be, opportunities for every individual to prove and use the talent given him for the general benefit of the church. If an individual has not an opportunity for the exercise of his talent, then of course he cannot be held responsible. But, the same Being which holds every individual responsible, has designed and provided that every member of His church shall have the opportunity. This sentiment will have the tendency of giving every individual member to feel himself to be of some importance in the church, as well as of some sacred responsibility.

But then comes the question—Will the Methodist people thus organise themselves for usefulness? Our mission does not terminate by writing, we conceive it is only the commencement of it. We must urge the question—Can we meet together to profit—to the purpose? We omit more duties through indolence than we neglect through interest. The trials of the church are tests which ascertain how much gold there is in us. Come, come, brethern, we should be frank one with another, if we are to be allies, half confidence is dangerous. "Be wise to-day, 'tis madness to defer."

It is not liberty that any people want, but the law of liberty—the law that clearly defines liberty, and the liberty that liberalises law. They are both indispensable. The liberty of maiming, robbing, or abusing one another is as bad as tyranny. Humanity wants no such liberty. Then let people define liberty: let us know what they mean by the word. The cant of liberty is like all other cants—at times most unmeaning or most unreasonable, and it is always equivocal. Methodism wants a good, strong, absolute law, that will curtail the liberty of one man to molest another man, and which will subject him to punishment if he does molest him. And this is the end of all reform. Liberty is a cant word of modern demagogues and flash orators; and the indiscriminate use of it tends to mislead men in respect to the urgent necessities of our social condition.

When such things are possible, severity becomes a virtue. But the great evil is, that the controlling severity is not a match for the erring severity; and being all in the hands of

man, instead of being judged by law, as an Omniprecient principle of authority, the remedy seldom reaches the disease, and the tyranny of the one party defies the blindness of the other.

Liberty will not be established anywhere alone, or even as a paramount idea. They are on a wrong track who confine themselves to that cry, it is a sign of the immature state of political being. Maturity always brings law, and law defines rights and curtails them; and until the question of these rights is settled in a church it can scarcely be said to have a character. At present the rights of Methodism are understood and established nowhere; and not more in Reform new, than in Conservative old, churches; for the truth is, all are old together—the Reform being merely a modern phase of an old system, under which, from time to time, the strong have subdued the weak.

There is a law in existence, but it is a free law—a law of liberty, which the hearts of all men will approve of. Such is the perfect law. Such a law is a Divine law, or *the* Divine law. It would be profanity to repeal it. It would put an end to legislation, it would only require administration. This is not too great perfection for the church to expect, and we are not foolish to expect its complete realisation. There is more than a possibility of acquiring its first principles, its alphabet, and beginning the task of learning as much as possible of it. It remains for the people to be willing "in the day of that power."

Despotism is to rule without law. There is a wide step between such advocates and witness. An acute but severe judge once remarked to a jury, "The counsel has said, I think this, and I believe that. A counsel has no right to say what he thinks, or what he believes; but since he has told you, gentlemen, his belief, I will tell you mine, that were you to believe him, and quit his client, he would be the very first man in the world to laugh at you."

Brethren, it becomes your province to act as a jury who are sworn to deliver a truth upon such evidence as shall be laid before them touching the cause they are to decide.

You may anticipate some of the objections which may be raised against the rules laid before you for your consideration and decision; but whatever may actually be those objections, and by whomsoever made, you will do well to bear in mind

the remark made by the judge to the jury, "The counsel has said, I think this, and I believe that. A counsel has no right to say what he thinks, or what he believes." That is a useful hint in reference to official advocates for Methodism as it should not be, who offer *viva voce* reports to your notice; the result, therefore, they have only laughed at you for your reprehensible credulity. But it shall be your own fault if that *laugh* is repeated at you.

On rule 6th—the *test* for the qualification of a leader, that "He should be a happy witness that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin." You may expect, from officials, strong opposition to it, direct or, in order not to come to the point, the strongest evasion. But you will have to be on your guard against all stratagem, artifice, or sophistry, that may be made use of as an excuse or means of freeing a candidate for office from the required *test*.

The question is, is it a scriptural doctrine, not what persons say, what *they* "think," and "believe?" In Methodism it is a scriptural doctrine, long since received and *settled*.

If the doctrine of personal holiness is not to be experienced by those persons who are appointed to be teachers in the church, by whom is it to be experienced? Is it to remain in our creed as a dead letter, only to be talked about and boasted of, to remain in the head, but not to reach the heart until death? It is not John Wesley's views of the doctrine of *Christian perfection*. It is not Methodism at all: it is Calvinistic doctrine.

If there is one doctrine more than another which is opposed by the *man* of *sin*, it is holiness—*experimental holiness;* and if he is found opposing it in one person more than another, it will be in officials in the church—the leaders, teachers, and guides of the flock—for he knows that one holy man of God thus engaged in active service in the church is likely to do more mischief to his kingdom than a number of private members; but, for the *test* to be applied to the *whole* of the overseers in the church, a perfect hurricane may be expected to arise, "according to the prince of the power of the air." That enemy to holiness finds his way into a "Leaders' meeting," as well as into a "Conference assembly." But how they manage to *test* their own theory, is more than we can say, we are at a loss to know. In Methodism the doctrince of holiness is settled, it is not to be brought into controversy; but

yet, by those officials who reject the *experimental test*, it is made of no *effect*.

The glory of Methodism is its purity, and its efficiency, its usefulness. It becomes the province of *Methodism as it should be*, the church, to defend its *glory*, in its administration—which is the act of enforcing, or applying, or giving sentence according to the sense of the law. It must be defended and preserved. The *test* must be applied. We are to "walk by the same rule, to mind the same things."

While you should not allow yourselves to be drawn into "doubtful disputations" on this essential subject, yet, pass it not over lightly, for your own confirmation, if you at all need it, and for your greater consolation; but especially, for the firing of your zeal to challenge such an opponent, in the language of our blessed Lord—"Art thou a master in Israel, and know not these things?" When so much is everywhere said in the Scriptures of God's *circumcising* men's hearts, *creating* in them *clean hearts*, *renewing* in them *right spirits*, and of the quickening and purifying operations of his spirit on their souls? Hast thou taken upon thee to guide the blind into the way of truth, and yet knowest not that truth thyself? Let not such a one think to escape these home thrusts by saying, these remarks are applicable relative to justification by faith—when we have not so learnt Christ—when we read, "And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith;" and, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen, and ye receive not our witness." How many masters are there still in our Israel who are in this respect deplorably ignorant; and, strange to tell, publish their ignorance and folly in the sight of Methodism by opposing the thing itself? Is it not strange that such masters cannot keep their own secret? But, "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

Therefore, perceiving that that *test* is now become especially necessary, in "Methodism as it should be," your enforcement is indispensible. The *test* must be applied in the name of the Great Lawgiver; "for the LORD *is* our judge, the LORD *is* our lawgiver, the LORD *is* our king, he will save us."—Isaiah, *33, 22*.

Brethren, it will be our delightful duty to study deeply and extensively this glory of our holy religion, and that in all its bearings and consequences, in order that we may be the

better prepared to defend it; a volume might be written to comfort and profit on this part of the subject now in hand, but it must be left with yourselves to dwell on; and to defend to the utmost as you value your Methodism—your spiritual welfare—the salvation of your own famllies—and the salvation of the great human family. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."—1st John 3, 8. Therefore, we are not to be doubtful characters, so that no one can say whose the handwriting is, but are to be manifestly the epistles of Jesus Christ, known and read of all men.

Rule 9th.—Equal opposition to this rule, as to that of rule 6th, may be anticipated from the officials, if not stronger; for some of them without heart, may contrive to get over the latter by shamming, while that scheme would fail their purpose on the former, except through their "declaration of principles." But ample protection will be found in rule 10th to defend and protect rule 9th; and assistance will be accessible throughout the present work, not only on rule 9th in particular, but on all the other rules in general.

Having to touch and retouch on the various subjects or ideas contained in, and connected with the thirty-four articles included in the rules, the work itself may appear to be fragmentary, but yet, at the same time, it may be found to operate to the furtherance of the main object and end, *order*. To every thing there is a season—a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which it planted; a time to break down, and a time to build up—so that order is the object and end of the different work to be accomplished.

All mismanagement is mobbish, and all disorder and confusion originates in bad organisation; when that is revealed, reaction shows itself, and a cry arises for unity of action. Law or liberty arose out of confusion. Unity is wanted, and we chose a unit, *law*. It is not by recrimination, and public discontentment, and grumbling, or writing letters to the newspapers, that any church can be reformed or rightly governed, In all such great emergencies *law* is especially wanted, and if it comes not, then defeat is inevitable. But we all make a profession of law—yes, but alas! our profession has been much better than our practice.

It is in the power of defeat to make fidelity appear a crime, or to change a noble devotion into matter of regret?

As reformers we have a twofold work to do—to root out, and to plant; to throw down, and to build. Our mission is, to destroy Methodism as it is, and to establish it as it should be. The design is one: separation is imperfect and can never accomplish the object. Agitation may be kept up for a time without any hostility on one part, or true friendship on the other, and so complete nothing, and our mission remain unfulfilled; but we can conceive of no alternative but to embrace, and to act on the one design. This was the plan adopted by the Old Testament reformers. Ye Methodist reformers, go ye and do likewise. Let us give a practicable application, having an eye to the rooting out work—the best planters are the best out-rooters, the best destroyers are the best builders. This may appear paradoxical, nevertheless it must be found to operate well, and to act effectually, while our weapons are not carnal, but mighty through God to putting down the strongholds! But while we rejoice we should rejoice with trembling. How much depends on our faithfulness. The extermination of the Canaanites depended on the faithfulness of Israel, and the security of Israel depended on the utter destruction of the Canaanites, and their principles. But let us ever remember the application is the chief concern of ours.

Effort.—Thus it is that God wills man to be great—that God wills man to be happy. *Effort* is the condition, *effort* the means, *effort* the vehicle, and the hope of all that he is ever to be. To the peace of ease we are not called, but to the joy of conquest.

It seems to be an established law of nature that in all great agitations for a principle, there shall be a series of losses and gains on both sides. At one time we are flushed with victory, at another time disconcerted with loss or defeat. There is no complete victory, but only an exchange of wrongs and burdens. But so it must be. Injustice requires it, and agitation comes in to force equalisation, that selfish peace, with its acquisitive spirit, is never likely to promote. Ends are gained in agitation which peace never thinks of, or has not the courage to promote; and men, who could not afford to do a generous action to promote the welfare of the people, discover, when necessity compels them to submit, and when the heart is not consulted, but the necessity demands, that they can well afford even more than the heart would acknowledge. Agitation is

a revealer of secrets, and it violently thrusts upon man what peace has not the skill nor the courage to do. Without agitation, what change would ever be effected to much purpose in the government or usefulness of the church? Methodism would remain for ever as it is, the people be no better off a thousand years hence than now, and the imbecile, superstitious, despotic, and puerile governments of Methodism would remain unchanged perhaps for ever. What has peace done for them? It has invented, no doubt, many social, civil, and political improvements; but these only tend to make the darkness more visible, by revealing more clearly than before the great chasm that separates the character of one portion of the people from another.

But what can men do when the new civilised means have proved themselves failures? They can only go back and try the old weapons with which their glorious ancestors founded churches, and constitutions, and other wonderful things, sword of the Spirit in hand, and clothed in garments spotted with blood. 'Tis melancholy, certainly, and very humiliating to think that, in the nineteenth century of Christianity, we are no farther advanced. If so, peace must be a dangerous thing; but so is agitation; and thus it is we miserable mortals, living, as we always have done, between the two horns of a dilemma, are tossed alternately from horn to horn, having no relief from the tormentors of one horn but the equally sharp and afflicting tortures of the other.

A good soldier does not waste his courage in words; he strikes before he talks such flippancy as officious cowards indulge in, whose authority is a mock, and their name a jibe. When factions arise on every side, and threaten the rights and liberties of the people, we are warned to prepare for clouds and storms.

True devotion arises from the love of God, and necessarily includes the love of man, as it connects gratitude with beneficence, and exalts that which is moral to divine, confers new dignity upon goodness, and is the object not only of affection, but of reverence. On the contrary, the devotion of the selfish, whether it be thought to avert the punishment which every one wishes to be inflicted, or to insure it by the complication of hypocrisy with guilt, never fails to excite indignation and abhorrence.

Agitation is a universal subject. Reform is not—science

is not; scarcely any art is universal; but here is an art that is publicly and privately universal in interest, and eclipsing all other arts in the excitement which it creates. Nothing more likely, therefore, to produce a radical change in our conversation, our schemes of reform, and improvement; nothing so likely to modify and to change all our old political tendencies, and to allay for a season all the petty effervescence which the rancorous spirit of controversy has occasioned in the season of peace. It is our decided opinion, and we hesitate not to state it, that this agitation, this confusion is God's order. It is a meeting of the sublimities, and living things and dead things must contribute their share to the magical features of the exhibition. Who can laugh, who can joke, who can even smile amid such collisions? Hitherto we have been playing comedies and farces; but now the tragedy is begun, and the tone and character of the Methodist church are changed.

In Methodism, Reformers are the agitators. Those who oppose Reform are the agitated. Here the whole of Methodism is included—all is agitation. Beyond the pale of Methodism, we can conceive that all, more or less, are indirectly interested. Therefore, in our view, the present agitation is of universal interest, hence its importance! But we regard it not our province to make a direct appeal to the public at large, or even to the "British public" in particular, as some Reformers have done heretofore. The direct appeal has immediate reference to that Methodism which is composed of agitators and the agitated.

We have asserted, and that freely, that the hitherto existing circumstances of the agitators for Reform have been rather diverting than serious, and rather ridiculous than rational, stuffed with wild and ludicrous conceits, capable of raising laughter, farcical, their characteristic.

But now the tragedy is begun indeed, and the tone and character of the Methodist church is changed.

As Reformers, we would be found carefully weighing the merits against the disadvantages on the question and necessity of Methodist Reform, and shedding what light and knowledge is in our power on the different church policies.

With some propriety, it might be said, even in the current of church policy—

> "There is a tide in the affairs of men,
> Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune."

This is one great secret of success in all human undertakings—taking the tide at the flood. There is also another great secret—taking the tide at the turn. But that is merely a new flood, or a tide reversed.

Great *undertakers* sometimes talk of stemming a tide. It is but a poor tide that any undertaker can stem. At most, it is merely a street river, commonly called a "kennel;" or, it may be, the contents of a water butt, which have burst their boundaries and threatened to inundate the kitchen and cellar. Even that it is sometimes impossible to stem; and when it is stemmed, the tide is not turned, but merely directed into another channel.

Who can turn a stream of water? Who can make that flow eastward which is flowing westward? Who can make that flow up which is flowing down? The plane of the earth must first be inverted. The world must be turned up side down.

But it is not alone to geographical tides that we must look. There is an intellectual tide also that must be considered. The last great movement is that out of which the next proceeds. The last great movement of the church being the Protestant Reformation, the next great movement of the church must come out of it. It cannot come out of Popery. That is left behind, and belongs to the past. It cannot speak to the present time, or electrify masses of men. It works with craft, and subtlety, and intrigue, amongst those yet unliberated minds that belong to the past; but it cannot impassion the living generation, especially in those lands where civilisation has attained its maximum, and where the power of the world has established its centre of action.

History reveals the great secret in every page, and Methodism is even now illustrating the truth of it in the hopeless and ineffectual struggles to turn the tide of humanity. Can she turn it? Is her position such as to render it possible? Does she occupy terminus: or is there a stage beyond her? There is a stage beyond her; and to that stage humanity infallibly will proceed, when it has done its utmost with Methodism, and found that utmost a failure.

In this we see the weakness of Methodism, and the certainty of her failure. She is merely demonstrating her own folly, the folly of attempting to regenerate a people or a world without principles. She is saying aloud to the whole world, "regeneration is merely an official political affair," and the

world is looking on and waiting for the result. It may wait for ever and see nothing but confusion, revolution after revolution, in interminable succession; John Wesley, Wesleyan Conference, Annual assembly, Leaders' meeting, dictators—with and without tails—but it will never see peace in Methodism accomplished by official political means. Being exclusively official, she is incapable of conducting an ecclesiastical reformation. Her experiments are all made upon the people; she tries improvements, and settles the affairs of the Connexions without reference to religious principles. She either laughs at it, or disowns it, or says she will snuff it out; but she has no mission: for she has no genius for affecting a reformation, either of doctrine or of government in the church, or even of morals, the twin sister of religion.

The tide at last must pass over to the people of methodism, where alone a principle of church government is to be found, and where that principle will have to be exercised in spurning and shaking off those insidious and determined enemies of all Christian churches since the days of the Apostles. Yea, verily, we believe that the time is come—the set time—when the people themselves will have to be their own leader in the great work of Methodist Reform, the tide is now turned in their favour.

The official Reformers neglected to go out with the tide, which was afforded them by Providence, to secure a righteous reformation in Methodism. The rights, liberties, privileges, and usefulness of the private members, were ignored by them most positively, by their declaration of principles; and, by those principles they are self-condemned. Any marvel that that they should have spent so much precious time, and wasted the people's money, and their own energies, in attempting to stem the tide of corruption, which had been accumulating for a century, in John Wesley's Conference! Let it be repeated: any wonder that the official Reformers have utterly failed to accomplish anything for the reform: that they are now found bound in the shallows of corruption and despotism! But we hesitate not to assert that it is to their deep disgrace, to find them stuck fast where they are. Hear one of the most active official Reformers on this very point:—

"Who can contemplate the history and the failure of past movements in our body without humiliation? Who can turn without a blush to the documents of other times, and find

individuals declaring, before God and man, their determination "to lift up their voice against the tyranny and oppression which prevailed in the body, and not to be silent till that tyranny and oppression had come to an end." Alas for human nature and its resolutions! and alas for ourselves, if we fail to profit by the history of the past!

"What! are we to bequeath nothing to the generations to come but bold resolutions, elaborate lectures, and eloquent speeches? If we fail, what a mine of absurdity? what an exhaustless fund of amusement, will the record of these days and doings present to those who shall come after! Let us imagine, if we can, the scorn with which our dusty and dishonoured flags will be unfolded, while woman of all ages, and children of both sexes, spell out the words,—

"No Secession!" "No Supplies!" No Surrender!" And, as they point to our failure, and tell the story of our self-secured defeat, they will contemptuously exclaim—"These are the men who began to build and were not able to finish."

"Who is prepared for this? Who would, by his supineness, entail such a disgrace upon his memory?

> "Would you, brother? No! you would not!
> If *you* would—*not I.*'
>
> "N. T. Langridge."

But that disgrace *is* entailed upon their memory! That very gentleman resigned his office, and has given up the connexional conflict for Methodist Reform, since the "last dying speech and confession" was announced.

The official Reform movement has proved abortive. For any practical result, for any sensible effect produced on Wesleyan Methodism, it might as well not have existed at all. Time, money, talent, have been thrown away. Memorials, councils, public meetings, have been just so much wasted energy. The steam has been got up to stem the tide, and has been expended upon an empty nothing. There have been grave debates, impressive and eloquent speeches, loud applause, earnest resolutions, numerous despatches, shrewd diplomacy; but there has been *nothing done.*

But, thanks to an overruling Providence, the tide is now turned in favour of the private members of the Methodist churches—the Connexions of Methodism

It will be the people's wisdom to move on with that favour-

able turn which has proceeded out of the last unwise movement. The people will have to remind themselves of the cause of the officials' failure, which has been already pointed out; that the work of Reform consists of a *double* or twofold work and labour—"To break down and to build up;" that in rejecting Methodism as it is, the reason for so doing will not only be explained and pressed home, but something provided in its stead superior, every way satisfactory, and placed within your reach and possession.

Wesleyan Methodists, of this twofold work you are required to weigh the merit against the disadvantages. That the system itself is essentially erroneous you may make yourselves acquainted by referring to its first principles, its origin. Therefore you cannot avoid referring to its instrumental founder, John Wesley. You have a slight sketch of his church character in his system of church government in the preliminary remarks. There will be found, that he claimed and exercised supreme power and authority in, and over the Methodist Connexion. That should be sufficient and reasonable grounds for the rejection of himself and his system together, without having to be urged to it by his despotic conduct—a word to the *wise* would be enough—and could the main design be accomplished without it, we would be gladly spared the filling up the dark lines of any despot's portrait; but flinching is out of the question.

The official reformers have not flinched from exposing the system, and the character and conduct of the Wesleyan Conference; and for which they are to be commended even if they had been a hundred-fold more severe. But we are disposed, for ourselves, to deal with the fountain-head.

In March, 1852, when the Wesleyan preachers were assembled together with some of their adherents, one of them said, "Would the meeting allow him, just for one moment, and for the special information of those persons who freely spoke of John Wesley Methodism, to relate an instance of John Wesley's church government, which he had heard from the lips of a person who was present on the occasion. His informant heard John Wesley preaching when several persons were with him. A succession of services had to be announced. Having finished his sermon in the evening, John Wesley made the announcements; one was, that a sermon would be preached in the week ensuing, by one James Deeds, a local preacher, at

whose house Mr. Wesley was sojourning. It so happened that this James Deeds had a higher notion of himself than Mr. Wesley appeared to entertain of him, for the announcement of his intended sermon was made last in order, and the service was least in importance. This circumstance appeared to have so mortified James Deeds, that he rose up in the chapel and said—'James Deeds will not preach at the time announced." Our Wesley, with equal promptitude, said 'James Deeds is no longer a member of the Wesleyan-Methodist Society.' (Cheers and laughter.) The old lady from whom he had recently had the story was still alive."

"Cheers and laughter" from "The President's 'Selected' Laymen." But what was fun to John Wesley, and to his successors, was death to a poor brother, who had been made an offender for a word, by a fellow creature who had the "Book" in his hand containing the command of Jesus Christ—"If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother; but if he will not hear *thee, then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." Matthew 18, 15 to 17,

What need have we of any further witness against John Wesley? Did Wesley's Conference ever beat this? and all the troubles of Methodism are clearly traceable to the same prolific source. But, then there is an account of Wesley's wholesale work, for the example of his Conference, where two hundred members were cut off at one time.

The following "letter" has been taken from a "Wesleyan Reform publication," intended to throw light on the proceedings of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference and its representatives:—

REV. JOHN WESLEY AND REV. JOS. BENSON.

The following curious apostolic, and genuine letter, never before published, will be read with great interest by our readers, not merely on account of its distinguished writer, and the still more celebrated personage to whom it is addressed,

but as powerfully bearing on one of the questions which now so violently agitate the Methodist public. We can vouch for its authenticity, and can name, if necessary, the travelling preacher in possession of the original; for unlike the *Illuminator*, we never publish facts on anonymous or questionable authority.

About the year 1788 the society in Dewsbury erected a chapel, and, contrary to their wishes, Mr. Wesley required it to be settled on the Conference plan. In consequence of their refusal, Methodist preachers were forbidden to preach in that chapel, and in the course of a correspondence on the subject, Mr. Benson, the useful and well-known commentator on the Bible, and editor of the *Wesleyan Magazine* when it was worth reading, addressed the following to the venerable founder of Methodism:—

Rev. and Dear Sir,—You tell me in the last letter I had the pleasure to receive from you, dated July 30, our committee send their ultimatum to the trustees of Dewsbury, by this post; if they accept it, well; if not, their blood will be upon their own heads. These proposals, which you call your ultimatum, I understand they were willing to accept. What a pity, then, they should afterwards have been withdrawn, and other different proposals made, which it seems they will not accept; as by this means an entire separation has taken place; much, very much, (I think), to the disgrace of both parties, (of both parties, I say;) because in a case of that nature, where neither essential truth was to be given up, nor plain duty omitted by either, if one side would not have yielded, the other should. I am very far from excusing the trustees at Dewsbury; I think them exceedingly to blame, and accordingly have written a long and plain letter to one of them upon the subject, which yet I fear will not produce any good effects. But are not we to blame also? Is the step we have taken consistent with Christianity, with prudence, or with the plan we ourselves profess to go upon? First, is it consistent with Christianity? Do the doctrines or examples of our Lord or his apostles authorise such a step? Do they authorise us to leave a congregation gathered by ourselves, and a society awakened and brought to God by our means, and that for many years has been under our care, and is still willing so to be, yea and to be directed by us in all spiritual matters, (to leave them I say,) because twenty or

thirty of them who happened to have the power in their hands, will not make over a house lately built to meet in, to the sole use of us, and our successors for ever, as not knowing, they say, what sort of men we or our successors hereafter may be. Where in the New Testament are we taught any thing like this, by precept or example? I read nothing, dear sir, like it in all the Bible; on the contrary, I find our Lord and his apostles, and evangelists, preaching everywhere, wherever a door was open, *without* making any objection on account of the place they might preach in, not being settled as they recommended, and much more, not deserting a people they had long preached to, and had under their peculiar care, on any such account. Nay I think it is very plain, from their whole doctrine and behaviour, that they would not have disturbed the peace of the most inconsiderable society of Christians about any such matter. I ask, secondly, is it consistent with prudence? are we not missing the very end we aim at? Yea, and taking the direct road to miss it, stretching the string till it breaks, and in this violent contention for power, losing the power that we have. The power arises from the people's love to us, and their love to us is the fruit of our usefulness to them. Let us continue to be useful to them, and they will continue to love us, and we shall continue to possess all the power a wise man would wish for—a power to do people good. This power, and together with it, all our influence in spiritual matters, we are depriving ourselves of as fast as we can. By our violent measures we are prejudicing our people against us; we are filling their minds with jealousies and suspicions concerning us, that we are selfish, designing men, aiming not so much to do our hearers spiritual good, as to establish ourselves in temporal power and authority; then the way being blocked up to do them good, our usefulness is obstructed among them; their love is lessened towards us, and our authority over them is at an end.

But as a recompense for this loss, human laws have given us power over the bricks and timber of a house, and we can, let who will hinder, send preachers to preach, where, by and by, it may be, none will be present to hear. Poor recompense! Give me the people, and let what will come of the houses; let me gather them into my Father's kingdom, and let the house be consumed with the world. As to that particular congregation, the case is plain, our imprudence is mani-

fest; in our great haste to prevent them ever separating from us and choosing a preacher of their own, we have taken steps which have induced them to do it immediately, whereas, had we yielded a little at this time, and suffered them to amuse themselves a little with that toy, their deed, I am persuaded we might have supplied them with preachers half a century, perhaps as long as we continued in a body, at least if we had sent them preachers calculated to do them good, and if not, the sooner they had turned their backs on us the better. Nay, and if we had but been quiet for the present, perhaps by and by their minds might have cooled, they might have seen otherwise, and have altered their deed according to our wish. I mentioned a third point. I doubt we are not consistent with ourselves; our professed design is to do the people all the good we can, not seeking theirs, but them; with this view we have preached in imitation of the apostles and first pastors of the church; wherever a door was opened in chapels, private houses, barns, stables, backyards, fields and streets, without inquiring whether those places were settled upon us according to our plan! nay, knowing they were not so settled. Now, either we did right or wrong in this. If right, why kick up a dust about one particular house, when there are many hundreds more, even as many private houses and barns as we preach in, nay, and some chapels, in the same, or rather worse, situation, being, to all intents and purposes, private property; if we have done wrong, let us change the plan of our proceeding, and abandon every private house, barn, stable, or backyard, where we have been accustomed to preach, unless they will settle them according to our plan; for it may happen that landlords or tenants may arise to possess those places, who may exclude us and receive other preachers; nay, the people that assemble in those places may, by and by, choose for themselves preachers of their own, and exclude us; let us, therefore, determine to be beforehand with them, and get them all properly settled, or give them up. This, dear sir, is the plan we must pursue if we wish to be consistent; and let it not be objected that we have societies at many of those places, containing scores, yea, hundreds, of precious souls, awakened by our means, and in the way to heaven; and if we, the shepherds of those sheep, desert them, they will be scattered from the fold, and either be torn in pieces, or perish for want of food. No matter, let them perish, we destroy them not; they destroy themselves in that they

will not settle their house according to our plan.* I say, therefore, since we have begun let us make an end; let us go through with the business, and determine to abandon every place that is not settled as we recommend. This will find the active men amongst us work enough; they may then give up preaching altogether, and go from place to place throughout the kingdom, endeavouring to establish our authority for ever, that we and our successors, from age to age, as long as the world shall stand, *and none else,* may appoint preachers to supply every chapel, private house, barn, stable, outhouse, or backyard, where preaching has been wont to be, and that none be permitted to preach in such places but such as we think proper; then will our due authority be properly extended through all the kingdoms, and our plan become permanent. Excuse me, my dear Sir, I am pained exceedingly to see such steps taken. I have told you before I have no fault to find with the plan of settlement fixed by the Conference. I wish every house in the kingdom was settled on that plan. I have no objections to any prudent peaceable measures that may be taken to bring this about; but to desert a congregation of 1,500 or 2,000 people, and leave a large society of pious souls as sheep without a shepherd, because we cannot, by fair means, prevail with the persons who happen to have the power in their hands to settle their preaching house as we desire; this is a step which I for one protest against, as unchristian, imprudent, and inconsistent with our profession and plan from the beginning. You, dear Sir, are not to blame, unless for hearkening (I think) more than you ought to the advice of those who are more forward and active in kindling a flame of strife and contention than in promoting peace and good will among men: and I have not written the above to you that you may answer it to me, but that if it contain anything that may be of use to you, in the conducting so great a work as the Lord hath set you at the head of, you may take it accordingly. Not doubting but that you will excuse the freedom I have taken in speaking my mind on this occasion, which a sense of duty has constrned me to do, and praying that we may never forget that our influence depends upon our usefulness, that whensoeve or wheresover we cease to be useful, our influence will cease,

* Mr. Wesley's former letter to Mr. B.

and that it will then signify little that we have possession of the bricks and timber of a house.—I conclude myself, as usual, you obedient servant in Christ,

Hull, Sept. 6, 1788. Jos. BENSON.

It must be understood that the above "letter" is not the expressed opinion of a Reformer, yet *he* saw that such a course was neither safe nor convenient. Instead of disproof, we simply quote the opinion of Mr. Benson, who was himself a Conference preacher—one of the very men who resisted the New Testament rights of the people, and promoted the expulsion of Mr. Kilham, who advocated those rights. Mr. Benson's opinion can neither overturn facts nor make people believe that despotism is liberty.

You have now a quotation of the last words of a dying man, the late Joseph Benson, as committed to writing—"He expressed (to Mr. and Mrs. Bulwer) his solicitude for the prosperity of the work of God in the Methodist Connexion, and said there was danger chiefly from three sources—*the love of riches, the love of honour, the love of* POWER. He hoped the preachers would be very *tender* of the cause of God, and that they would seek nothing but the *good* of souls."

But, O! how very slender must have been his *hopes*, if he had taken John Wesley as a pattern—*his love of* POWER. For it is most evident, from the whole course of Wesley's conduct in the government of Methodism, that *the love of* POWER was his unconquered besetment—his *pride, ambition*, and, above all, *the lust of* POWER. To which most men will sacrifice all other propensities, their ease, pleasure, health, &c. This is the most bewitching passion in the human heart. Both in *church* and *state* it is ruinous, but particularly so in the former. With such a ringleader as John Wesley, what could have been the prospects of Methodism?

The following "letter" is taken from the *Wesleyan Times*, of May, 1853:—

"THE REV. JOHN WESLEY ON THE PROSPECT OF METHODISM.

"Dear Sir,—Looking, the other day, over some old tracts, &c., I found the enclosed letter. Thinking it would be interesting to many of your readers, I have sent it for insertion

(if you think proper) in your excellent paper.—Yours, respectfully,

JARVIS COE.

"Diss, April 9, 1853."

(Copy.)

(From the "Life of the Rev. John Wesley." Published in the year 1792.)

"'Dear Sir,—For your obliging letter, which I received this morning, I return you thanks.

"'Our opinions, for the most part, perfectly coincide respecting the stability of the Connexion, after my head is laid in the dust. This, however, is a subject about which I am not so anxious as you seem to imagine; on the contrary, it is a matter of the utmost indifference to me, as I have long foreseen that a division must necessarily ensue, from causes so various, unavoidable, and certain, that I have long since given up all thoughts and hopes of settling it on a permanent foundation. You do not seem to be aware of the most effective cause that will bring about a division. You apprehend the most serious consequences from a struggle between the preachers for power and pre-eminence, and there being none among them of sufficient authority or abilities to support the dignity, or command the respect, and exact the implicit obedience which is so necessary to uphold our constitution on its present principles. This, most undoubtedly, is one thing that will operate very powerfully against unity in the Connexion, and is, perhaps, what I might possibly have prevented, had not a still greater difficulty arisen in my mind. I have often wished for some person of abilities to succeed me as the head of the church I have, with such indefatigable pains and astonishing success, established; but, convinced that none but very superior abilities would be equal to the undertaking, was I to adopt a successor of this description, I fear he might gain so much influence among the people as to usurp a share, if not the whole, of that absolute and uncontrollable power which I have hitherto, and am determined I will, maintain so long as I live; never will I bear a rival near my throne. You, no doubt, see the policy of continually changing the preachers from one circuit to another, at short periods; for, should any of them become popular with their different congregations, and insinuate themselves into the favour of their hearers, they might possibly obtain such influence as to establish themselves independently

of me and the general Connexion. Besides, the novelty of the continual change excites curiosity, and is the more necessary, as few of our preachers have abilities to render themselves in any degree tolerable any longer than they are now.

"'The principal cause which will inevitably effect a diminution and division in the Connexion after my death, will be the failure of subscriptions and contributions towards the support of the cause; for money is as much the sinews of religion as of military power. If it is with the greatest difficulty that even I can keep them together, for want of this very necessary article, I think no one else can. Another cause, which, with others, will effect the the division, is the disputes and contentions that will arise between the Preachers and the parties that will espouse their several causes; by which means much truth will be brought to light, which will reflect so much to their disadvantage, that the eyes of the people will be opened to see their motives and principle; nor will they any longer contribute to their support, when they find all pretentions to sanctity and love are founded on motives of interest and ambition. The consequence of which will be, a few of the most popular will establish themselves in the respective places where they have gained sufficient influence over the minds of the people; the rest must revert to their original humble callings. But this in no way concerns me. I have attained the object of my views, by establishing a name that will not soon perish from the face of the earth; I have founded a sect which will boast my name long after my discipline and doctrines are forgotten.

"'My character and reputation for sanctity is now beyond the reach of calumny; nor will anything that may hereafter come to light, or be said concerning me, to my prejudice, however true, gain credit.

——— "'My unsoiled name,
The austereness of my life, will vouch against it,
And so the accusation overweigh,
That it will stifle in its own report,
And smell of calumny.'

"'Another cause, that will operate more powerfully and effectually than any of the preceding is, the rays of philosophy which begin now to prevade all ranks, rapidly dispelling the mists of ignorance which have been long, in a great degree, the mother of devotion, of slavish prejudice, and the

enthusiastic bigotry of religious opinions. The decline of the Papal power is owing to the same irresistible cause; nor can it be supposed that Methodism can stand its ground when brought to the test of truth, reason, and philosophy.

"'J. W.'"

"'City-road, Thursday morning.'"

Does the above letter require any comment? Will you not at once see by it, that "There is one God; and John Wesley is his Prophet!"

As free agents, if you prefer John Wesley to Jesus Christ, you are at liberty to continue to be his professed followers. But then, you will have no *right* to "name the name of Christ," as "the Head over all things to his church."—"How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, *then* follow him."

Your Conference preachers have made their choice: "They will follow the Scriptures in the light of John Wesley." But you must choose for yourselves, as you will have to stand in your own lot hereafter.

John Wesley, himself, will have to stand in his lot, be that lot what it may!

Here, in Wesley's system, is the blackness of darkness, the "darkness visible"—better to be left alone in the wilderness than companionship with such, anywhere within the span of the Universe—hence, to escape, we dare and do anything within the compass of Christian man—yea, we would carry out the climax, if possible, equal to John Wesley's *daring*, in his lust of *power*, to crush the church—the Church of the Living God, whose authority he set at nought, proclaiming himself to be the head. Yea, we must be found in the path of duty, to "come up to the help of the Lord: to the help of the Lord against the mighty."

We suspect that you are not aware of the immensity of the subject—but a drop of water contains the same elements as a lake of it—every subject has its root. John Wesley is the root of Methodism as it is, with all its misdeeds. The original, the first cause: his is the first principle out of which Wesleyan Methodism is resolved, and which will not admit of any further resolution. Hence, the Wesleyan Conference declaration, on which it acts—"Never will we agree to mutilate or alter the essential principles of that pure and simple

constitution, which, under God, was confided to us as a sacred deposit, by the Rev. John Wesley."

Had John Wesley "taken the tide at the flood," which opened a prospect of usefulness that might have carried down his name as a blessing to the latest generations, the revival of pure religion taking place at this epoch—the rising spirit of freedom and learning—all of which would have helped to raise the Methodist church and character to the admiration of contemporaries and the applause of their posterity. But what a different picture do we behold? The spirit he found in the people was soon repressed,—he was indeed a despot, and our forefathers, like the spaniel, seem to have been proud to lick the hand that chastised them; and, concurring testimony proves that, having effectually crushed the rising love of liberty, Wesley left the people a society of slaves. What were his Conferences or other official meetings but obsequious cloaks to his will. It was his *iron* will that governed every case. You see, we have arrived at the climax of wonder, and are not to be astonished at anything they say or do.

But yet, with the sentiment of the patriot for his country, we say, Methodism! "with all thy faults we love thee still." Looking at the most eminent and powerful men of the age, therefore, we must indeed stand in the attitude of adoration at that Divine Power which could bring good out of evil, and overrule the wrath of man to praise him; for we find such lamentable contrast between the professions and the practices of the leading Reformers of that time, such clear understanding of revealed truth, and such ready abandonment thereof when interest required it—such vile pandering to power and abominable reference to that worst of principles, that the end sanctifies the means—such rapine and deceit, that when we witness the successful assaults upon the ancient strongholds of religious superstition—the getting rid, or the shaking off, of the church and state domination—the promulgation of the Scriptures, and the great change effected in men's minds, we must see that not unto man belongeth the praise, but that we ought to say, to God be all the glory!

Some persons admire everything so indiscriminately, that it is impossible to attach much value to their praise; but we should criticise as well as admire, never flatter, but dare to blame, and when we commend, are conscious the tribute is deserved.

John Wesley, however, had two great defects. One was, attaching too much importance to trifles, and making them the criterion of character, the other, trifling with a foundation that should be held sacred, which might become the wildest ruin of every thing sacred. He departed, and his followers sighed over the dissolving of their first union's dream; but notwithstanding their weakness on this subject, some of them had a just estimation of themselves, and a spirit which, when once roused, guided them to exertions which astonished themselves. They read much, and reflected more. They blushed for their past weakness, and learned to think with contempt upon the man who had so false an estimate of the true excellence and worth of a church character.

A mixture of praise and blame is always more true than either apart. The extravagant panegyric of the biographer, when treating of the character of his subject, is both misleading to the understanding and injurious to morals; for it never fails to be found out and corrected by some counterstatement, in which all the vices of the over-praised hero are shamelessly exposed; and all parties—the hero himself, his praiser and dispraiser—are at last set down as unprincipled partisans, who look only at their own side of the statue. He who would see the truth must walk round it; and he who would exhibit the truth to others must turn it round, and take off the mask, if there be one on it.

> Betake thee to the Book whose pages teem
> With love and life; there read of mote and beam.

The Scriptures, in its history of character, are *impartial*, just, without any bias or undue influence.

It has been observed, that the Psalms are properly placed in the middle of the Bible, being the very soul of Godly experience and of the whole of the Gospel. The book of Psalms is more frequently quoted in the New Testament than any other. Christ himself refers to them with approving testimony. He refers to them for the purpose of controversy with the Jews—the Jews themselves acknowledged the Psalms of David—and his purpose succeeded, for it is immediately added, *No man was able to answer him a word*—they were completely nonplussed and confounded.

In making mention of the two individuals who professed to be men of one *book*, we find that there is apparent frankness with both, but there exists a manifest difference in their prac-

tical sentiment. While John Wesley's device is contained in the following motto—"I desire to *do* all things *openly* and *above-board.* I would have *all the world* and *especially all* our *Society*, see, not only *all* the steps we take, but the *reasons why* we take them!" David takes a different, a higher philosophy, to maintain his profession—"Thou hast commanded *us* to keep thy precepts diligently. O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! Then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect unto all thy commandments," Psalm cxix. 4 to 6. "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law," v. 18. "I have stuck unto thy testimonies: O Lord, put me not to shame," v. 31. "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven," v. 89. "O, how love I thy law! it *is* my meditation all the day. Thou, through thy commandments, hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they *are* ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies *are* my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts. I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word."—97 to 101. "Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. I have sworn, and I will perform *it*, that I will keep thy righteous judgments," v. 105 to 106. "*It is* time for *thee*, Lord, to work: *for* they have made void thy law. Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold. Therefore I esteem all *thy* precepts *concerning* all *things to be right; and* I hate every false way. Thy testimonies *are* wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them," v. 126 to 129. The following sentence is the great secret of all:—"The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple," v. 130.

He that resists the *truth* of God is capable of effecting the worst purpose of Satan.

It is true that John Wesley professed to be a "man of one book"—the more inexcusable he, wherein he was inconsistent with that profession. The secret of that mystery is, that *the word* was refused *entrance* on that important subject; therefore, he was left to himself to grovel in the dark, and to manifest the insufficiency and absurdity of unassisted reason—of that reason, which John Wesley was wont to make so prominent boast of, and which is now become a *weekly* motto by parties who know better. So that it would plainly appear

that John Wesley's *reasons* were his rule of practice, independent of the Scriptures, relative to the government of the church. And, therefore, this is sufficient to account for the dark side of John Wesley's portrait, however dense that darkness may be.

But David said, "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." This Psalm of David's is a remarkable portion of God's Word. It is understood that the whole of it, containing 176 verses, with the exception of only two verses, treats of the Word or the Law of God. So that it would appear, indeed, that David *was* a "man of one book," as his rule both of faith and practice. Therefore, David became a pattern worthy of God's recommendation to his son Solomon—"And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, *and* will keep my statutes and my judgments: Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever."

But, it is easy to exclude the noontide light by closing the eyes, and it is easy to resist the clearest truth by hardening the heart against it. Scripture history proves this, and that impartially. There, without exception, the dark side of the great and good is held up and exposed, as well as the light side. There we can depend on the truth of the character.

But, it has been considered that the tendency to extravagance and exaggeration is so great in all men, that it is scarcely possible to obtain a true delineation of a character. To judge by pure reason, and not by feeling, is so very difficult, that it belongs chiefly to a perfect being. Feeling is a weakness, an amiable weakness sometimes, and sometimes not—but still a weakness. Reason is not a weakness—it is power. Perhaps we all possess the feeling in greater perfection than the reason, for weakness rather than strength seems characteristic of our nature. We love a character with our feelings, and we hate a character with our feelings. We draw the character with our reason, but then our reason is always liable to be in the pay of our feelings. It is a servile thing, this reason, an unprincipled thing—a sort of animal that will obey any master. If love prevail, reason will back it and support it with its logic or its sophistry, it matters not which. If the logic suffice, so much the better; but if the logic be feeble, then sophistry is employed. If hatred prevail, it is just the same;

the reason obeys the predominant feeling, and helps it to do good or evil, just as a dog will obey its master, and help him either to save life and property or to take them. Hence the portraits of men are hardly ever fairly drawn. If the men are party men, they are drawn black by one set of artists and white by another—straight by one and crooked by another. It is feeling that inspires such delineations of character; the reason that sketches is in the pay of passion.

Thus have we Methodists been bewildered and led astray by extravagance. It is as offensive to the sense of justice to hear extravagant praise as extravagant blame. Wesley is lauded as a sort of god with some of the Methodist people, from the lowest to the highest order—contending for Wesleyanism, some for it "as it is," and some for it "as it was,"—for pure Wesleyanism—his very mistakes and blunders, and even his unscriptural tenets, relative to church government, have been all overlooked or forgotten, in the fanciful delusion that envelopes them. Wesley, with other great men, are all more or less falsified by the feelings that prompt the intellect to delineate them, unless they be represented with all their sides whether these be dark or light.

Some simpletons may find fault with the writer, for finding fault with Wesley; but how is it possible to delineate such a man fairly to the feelings of all classes of men, unless you represent him as light on one side and dark on the other? It may be thought wiser to condemn the principle and let the man alone: there is less harm in condemning an action, a saying, or a principle. It is the province of human judgment to do this, when it finds itself impelled by conviction to do so; for, in condemning a principle, we inflict no personal injury on an individual who holds it; but rather kindly and generously warn to a re-consideration of the matter, and the abandonment of it as a dangerous or untenable doctrine. This should be regarded as a serious matter of duty, and not as fault finding. Blunders and extravagances may be excusable in common conversation, but when they infuse themselves into printed philosophy, theology, and criticism—intended for popular instruction, christian and mental elevation—it becomes a serious matter of inquiry how far it is admissable, whoever may be the author, however great and good he may be, giving him credit for doing his best; but, being an imperfect man, he may commit blunders, and these blunders may be great

mischiefs: the greater the man, too, the greater the mischief, when he makes a mistake. Friendly critics look at the light side, and unfriendly, at the dark. We should look at both in order to discover any mutual mistake before injuring each other.

It is a fact that David had his dark side as well as Wesley; but, mark, with this difference—David's was an exception to his rule, while Wesley's was his rule itself,—an obstinate and perpetual perversion of the professed rule, in respect to his conduct in the government of the Methodist church. Relative to David, witness the testimony given to his character. "David did *that which was* right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from any *thing* that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite." But this solitary exception must be regarded as a *dark spot* in David's character. It cannot be attributed to a mistake of his judgment, it was a designed and studied sin, continued in for some time, defended with a succession of other sins, presumptuous and scandalous to his government, and to the true religion. And this conduct of David was marked with God's sore and terrible displeasure for violating his holy commands. *He* could not be partial in conniving at so great a crime in him, whom He had termed *a man after His own heart.* But, bad as this conduct of David was, there was some redeeming quality in this portion of his character: he was open to conviction, and confessed his sin when charged with it by the messenger of God. Hence, Nathan said to David, "Thou art the man. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I annointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul: and I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou has despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, in the sight of the sun. For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this before all Israel, and before the sun. And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned

against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die."

David said, *I have sinned against the Lord.* Overwhelmed with shame, stung with remorse, and oppressed with a dreadful sense of the Divine vengeance impending and ready to fall upon himself and his family, he could only give utterance to this short confession. How sincere and serious it was; what a deep sense he now had of his guilt, and from what a softened, penitent, broken and contrite heart, his acknowledgment proceeded, we may see in the Psalms he penned on this occasion, especially the 51st,—*The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.*

Thus much for David's redeeming quality on that dark spot in his portrait, and mercy triumphing over judgment.

And this mercy became the burden of David's song:—"O give thanks unto God of heaven: for his mercy *endureth* for ever."

And who questions but that David has a bright crown in glory, and is one of those, *after God's own heart,* who are nearest to the throne of the God of mercy.

Now, we do not hesitate to assert, as our most deliberate and decided opinion and conviction, that from what has already been advanced on the dark side of the two portraits, that the hemisphere in David's is the smallest, it may be, merely the spot upon the sun's disc, a tinge spot compared with Wesley's, inasmuch as there is more charity to be exercised towards a person who has broken all the Divine commands, including the crime of murder itself, followed by a sincere confession, "I have sinned against the Lord," than, in truth there can be for a person who breaks the least of God's Commandments and who is found all his lifetime justifying and excusing his conduct, as did John Wesley in his unscriptural system of church government. And in all this Wesley attempted and persisted to justify himself; and it is this justification of what is wrong in itself which has formed the dark side of John Wesley's portrait—he, "a man of one book," brings his *reasons* for violating the *commands* contained in that *book,* in the government of the Methodist church. Therefore, we repeat it, more charity, with strict propriety, may be exercised towards a person who has broken the 6th and 7th Commandments, followed by true repentance, than towards a person who may have been guilty of less gross misdeeds,

but who may be found justifying himself in that which is wrong—it is such conduct which forms the darkest side to the portrait. Thus John Wesley usurped the authority of Christ in the government of his church, and all his lifetime producing *his "reasons"* for so doing—justifying himself while perverting the Scriptures on church discipline and general government.

A bad or an erroneous example, supported by the authority, reputation, and majesty of religion, is a very subtle poison, from which it is very difficult for men to preserve themselves. It is a great misfortune for any people to be obliged to *beware* of those very persons who ought to be their rule and *pattern*. This is a reflection we may justly lament, that the evil referred to should be so prevalent as to render the observation, and the caution on which it is founded, so necessary. But let no man imagine that erroneous officials are to be found among one class of persons *only*. They are to be found in the branches as well as in the root; in the different sects and parties as well as in the mother church,—from which the others are separated, outwardly. On either hand there is little room for glorying: *professors* and officials may *change*, but the *truth* of the Lord abideth for *ever*.

This, we say, has ever been John Wesley's great defect—trifling with a foundation that should be held sacred, which has become the wildest ruin of everything sacred in Methodism.

We shall now touch on another great defect in John Wesley's character—that, of attaching too much importance to trifles, and making them the criterion of Methodist character. Reference is now made to the state church.

In coming to the point at once, on that subject, we should not hesitate to express our opinion and conviction, that it is *not*, never *was*, and never *can* be a church of God. That it is not worth the breath that would proclaim its worthliness!

Let it surrender at any time, and at discretion, saying, what is it that is required? Give up the whole of the people's property—the nation that is swallowed up once in seven years. So John Wesley's church is no trifle either—no trifle of an EVIL. Church and State—a robbing by law—a trick of State, to mark the rapine and to share the prey—that it is founded in perjury and robbery, and in blood.

But for the sake of those for whom we feel a deep concern,

we will try to keep somewhat cool for a little, while we proceed.

Establishments, even if pure in creed and practice, are not plants which the Father hath planted, and, therefore, must infallibly be rooted up: they are invasions of God's prerogative, and, therefore, must be destroyed by the breath of his mouth—they are obstacles to the spread of religion, and, therefore, must be removed out of the way. The sure words of prophecy includes their doom. Public opinion, the instrument of an avenging Providence, is decidedly against them. The fact is, that it is a mere question of time.

Things ought to be called by their right names. If one man went into the street and picked another man's pocket the law branded him as a robber, but if he went to Parliament to get a law to pick another man's pocket, that they called "protection;" but though the law might make it legal, it did not make it moral. It is quite absurd in some parties, in such a nation as England, to see how many advocates there are for a system of legalised robbery. And the Wesleyan body, as a body, has done more to oppose the civil and religious rights of the people than any other body of the people. While the generality of candidates for power in *church and state* flatter with their lips those men by whose suffrages they expect to be advanced, yet, at the same time, they despise them in their hearts, and sometimes give expression to it. It is said that the late Sir Robert Peel, when speaking on the opposition, spoke as follows:—"The Baptist ministers oppose the grant, so do the Independents, so do the Methodists. I can understand the two former, for they are consistent; they say, give grants to none; but these Methodists I cannot understand, for while they put up one hand, and say, 'Do not give any money to Maynooth,' they put up the other, and say, 'Gentlemen, give it to us.'"

Who *can* understand the Wesleyan system? It is the mystery of inconsistency, and the mystery of iniquity, with which John Wesley was possessed—he, the greater part of his life, *acting* dissent, and at the same time *professing* to be a churchman. This proves not only John Wesley's folly, but his crime! "*For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.*"—Gal. ii. 18. In fact, there was no greater dissenter than John Wesley. The Methodist people, relative to experimental and practical religion, had no

more communion with the Church of England than they had with the Church of Rome, but were diametrically opposed to each other. Therefore, it was the tyranny of invincible prejudice for Wesley to persist that the Methodist should not separate from the state church.

All this involves a question of authority which is curious and interesting, and, moreover, of great moral importance; for authority is often employed as a cloak, under the disguise of which the public mind is assailed by passions and unrighteous ideas, which dare not show themselves openly unsanctioned by a name of repute. Authority answers all arguments very summarily. With some advocates of Methodism it is quite sufficient to reply, in justification, that the thing is Wesleyan—here is their wholesale answer to every person on all Methodist subjects.

Suffice it to say, generally, that the attempt to force uniformity of belief in the veriest trifles have the necessary consequence of bringing the essentials of religion into doubt, for when men raise trifles to the level of serious matters, a subsequent reaction degrades serious matters to the level of trifles.

One of John Wesley's unaccountable, greatest inconsistencies and defect was, his everlasting clinging to the name of the state church, which has been ruinously infused into the Wesleyan system; therefore, we regard it not as foreign to the present work to dwell on the unscriptural tenor or immoral nature and influence of the said state church.

We regard not the Church of England, so called, as a Protestant church. A Protestant is a person who belongs to the Reformed religion, as delivered by those that at first protested against the errors of the Church of Rome. The name was first given in Germany to those who adhered to the doctrine of Luther, because, in 1529, they *protested* against a decree of the Emperor Charles V. *They* are to be respected; reformation is to be loved—that reformation which leads to salvation. It has been said that the contents of the Bible may be expressed in two words, a "Saviour," and "Salvation:" a blessed reformation that.

The absorbing importance of the subject matter, to which must be devoted this short section of the work, purporting to bring into a focus the transactions and enterprises of this remarkable period, has led us to see the desirableness of its

being to a certain extent kept distinct; so that we have hitherto postponed bringing before the reader any of the early workings of those principles which were the forerunners of what is well known under the designation of the reformation. And, because on events connected herewith our actual enjoyment of civil and religious liberty so mainly depends, the necessity is the greater for the more detached and forcible representation of the mighty change which took place in the development of the human mind, by its becoming disengaged from the trammels of tradition, superstition, and ignorance; and its being led forth into the hitherto almost untrodden ways of mental boldness, and spiritual freedom, amidst all the dangers of such daring attempts, which were guided by that light, which, if it did not at once achieve a conquest over the strongholds of established error and foregone intellectual blindness, at least broke down some of their buttresses, and so exposed the weakness and peril of the building, that much of crumbling rubbish was removed, the gaps repaired with materials of a nobler order, and, albeit, we must acknowledge, with grief, that the edifice had better have been wholly pulled down, and, as some think, a new one constructed, which should indeed have become an imperishable record of greater mercy to man. Yet too much was now effected to suffer even those who take a wider view to pass by a retrospect of this period without devout thanksgiving to that Overruling Power, who alone can bring good out of evil, and cause the wrath of man to praise him, for having infused that vigour of inquiry, which terminated in such enlarged knowledge as instrumentally lighted up "such a flame as shall never be extinguished."

Enough was now in motion to awaken the minds of men, and excite that which generally precedes a revolution of opinion.

The clergy were supported by obligations, or free gifts, there being no general oblation to pay tithes till long after the period of Augustine — about three hundred years after Christ. But in the lapse of the time came a woful departure from this simplicity—the religious became the allies, and at last, too often, the masters of the state, and then they took care to identify themselves with the power and grandeur of the world, and, departing from the plainness of the Gospel, acquired possession of tithes, glebe land, the division of the country into parishes, the whole endowment of which became

the property of the church, independent of secular control and influence, which it is scarcely possible to estimate, the land being almost covered with religious houses, abbeys, monasteries, nunneries, and friaries: the object of this section being to show that quite enough of corruption existed within the bosom of the church to account for its decay; and that the enormous wealth which the covetousness, or the piety, of foregone generations had accumulated, proved a bait to the cupidity of Henry the Eighth, and his court, too tempting to be resisted; and, it cannot be doubted, that while Luther and others were zealous to remove sentimental abuses, and the way for the promulgation of clearer doctrines, there were not here wanting those who joined in the cry on the plea of the notorious abuses of the church, but were actuated by casting their eyes on the farms, and manors, and the gold and silver ornaments, collected by the religious communities. It may be all very well for Catholics to dwell on the rapacity which characterised the enemies of the papal establishment; but had *they* been going forth without scrip or purse—taking no thought for the morrow—intent on the propagation of truth, and coming out from the world, being separate, there would have been no plunder to stimulate the cupidity of their foes. By the compelled authority of Parliament Henry the Eighth declared himself the head of the church within his own realm. When his own supremacy, and the prostration of the clergy, were thus, for the first time, proposed to him, he was flattered as regards his passion for "another woman;" and his cupidity was excited by a glance at the good things which those self-denying men, the clergy, had heaped up for themselves! hence,—the "protector and sole head of the church in England." Thence it was deduced that the Old Testament, the New, the practice of the primitive church, reason, and the laws of England, all made for the King's supremacy, which had now better be assumed, for the purpose of effectually extirpating the tyranny of Rome. And, the Reformers rejoiced that the Scriptures would be considered the standard of faith, and no longer human opinions—so it is said,—and thus it is written of him, who had acquired that relish for blood which his future course so shockingly exemplified, and proved him a monster of blood and ingratitude, a royal tiger.

When it suited his purpose to reward his minions, and nothing else readily offered, he had recourse to "the church."

He required his "vicar-general" to give a benefice to one who was kept in the royal service, because "he had trained two hawks for his Majesty's pastime, which flew and killed their game very well."

It is the self-same principle in fermentation—the same desideratum of men destitute of the spirit—the setting up of *form* instead of *power*. It ought to be the aspiration of every good man, *lay* or *ecclesiastic*,—"Oh, my soul, enter not thou into their secret, for their feet go down to death, their steps take hold on hell!"

On approaching the abomination every step increases the odium, in fact, it has turned out that the whole nation has long been polluted.

We have no difficulty in telling when it came from *head quarters*. The annoyance could very easily have been overcome by burying them; but this is not permitted as yet, for we have an object in looking at them, from time to time, until at last we shall, by united effort, be obliged to request to remove the corruption to a greater distance.

The establishment must be put down by law, or the people will put it down by methods which the law does not sanction, but is unavailing to prevent. No measure short of abolition will meet the popular demand. The grievance of the establishment is not that it exists in this shape, or after that fashion, but that it exists in any shape, or after any fashion—in a word, its being is a crime. Into no shape can it be modelled, in which it would not continue to affront reason, and shock the first principles of the science of government. Too much has been said of its unchristian affluence, and too little of its immoral nature. The nature of spoliation depends not upon the quantity of booty the robber decamps with; a farthing unjustly acquired, violates morals as much as a larger amount. No reduction, therefore, of the wealth of the church establishment would remedy this vice of the institution. Were its revenues pared down to sixpence per annum, that sixpence remaining a charge upon a dissenting population for the benefit of others, the moral objection would remain also; the church establishment would be no whit less radically dishonest than it is at present, with all its pristine opulence in its coffers. And the same observations that apply to the fraud apply to the intolerance of the system. Intolerance is no more than robbery, a question of extent or of degree. It is inconsistent

with religious liberty. But it is a great mistake to think that the seat of the grievance is the gold, or that the subtraction of the per centage from the income of the establishment would make it a less spiritual despotism than it is at this moment, with mammon flowing into its treasury. To admit this were to surrender the principle. We hold, that, if justice is to be done to the people at large, and the sacred rights of conscience thoroughly vindicated, it is an appropriation of the whole that must be made, and not of any part. If you cannot nationalise the church itself, which is impracticable—then the alternative is to nationalise the church property. Reduced by the rules of good government, and with respect to the religious rights of the people, it is "all surplus," and should every farthing be "appropriated" to the nation. This, somebody may say, is not to reform, but to subvert—we grant it. With respect to the institution in question, we are subverters, not reformers. There are cases for the pruning knife, and there are cases for the axe. The present belongs to the latter class.

Now, no people has a greater right and a greater interest in promoting the separation of the church from the state than the Methodist people. They, with other Dissenters, build their own chapels, and pay for them; they choose their own ministers, and support them. We are of those who seek, by every constitutional means in our power, to have *not* our PRETENDED, but our *real* grievances removed. We seek justice for ourselves and for our brethren; and this can never be obtained while one sect is dominant, and supported at the expense of the rest. The connexion of the church with the state is "*the great grievance.*" It is in connexion with this question that we look with such interest on the struggle of the Wesleyan Methodist Reform. The question of Wesleyan Reform must be effected—the Wesleyan system power be annihilated, before anything effectual can be done in separating the church from the state.

This, then, is the *greater* grievance, that John Wesley, in his system of government over the Methodist people, attempted a despotic rule in all things; one of which was, that they should not separate from that hideous harlotry, the alliance of church and state, equally at issue with the Word of God as with the principles of common honesty and common sense. He was not influenced in his decisions by that invaluable

maxim of the English constitution, "that what concerns all should be done with the approbation of all." Cheering, indeed, would it be, could we perceive that this maxim, so dear to the hearts of all, has not been utterly and recklessly disregarded.

We are well aware that the question, where ought power to rest? is of vast interest and moment. Whether it regards our civil or ecclesiastical institutions, its prostitution, in past ages, to the worst, the most inhuman, the most bloody, the most revolting, and the most diabolical of purposes, stands prominently forth as a beacon to warn posterity, not less as regards the church than the state. What we contend for is, that let the power of legislation be placed where it may, unless it be exercised in accordance with the views of a large majority of the governed, dissatisfaction, agitation, discord, and disunion must necessarily be the result.

We are aware that it has gone forth to the world that the Methodists, as a body, approve a state religion. That Wesley—that the majority of the Wesleyan clergy are in favour of a state religion, can scarcely be doubted even by those who wish it were otherwise; but to say that this is equally true of the Wesleyan people, is a bold and unwarranted assertion.

That the Wesleyan clergy, who are entirely supported by voluntary contributions on the broadest basis, both as regards the number of contributors and the smallness of the contributions; that a clergy, who receive no benefits from the state, save what alike extend to the whole of the community; that a clergy who, till very recently, have been accounted as the very scum of Christian teachers, and who have been traduced, reviled, and calumniated in every possible way by the state-paid clergy, from the mitred bishop even down to the village curate; we repeat, that the Wesleyan clergy, so maintained, so circumstanced, should be anxious to support the alliance of church and state, and to perpetuate a state-paid clergy, is indeed passing strange, which can only in the least be accounted for, but from John Wesley's inconsistent conduct, in declaring that the Methodists should not separate from the church; but looking here your wonder may cease at anything! But it would be a paradox never to be explained on rational principles, were it found that, though the Wesleyan people have for a century, of their own free choice, supported a clergy of

their own appointment, they nevertheless approve of the alliance of church and state, and approve of the *principle* of a state-paid clergy.

It is a fact which few will deny, that Methodism has demonstrated on an extensive scale the efficiency of the voluntary principle; that Methodism has done more by the system of itinerancy, by the extensive introduction of lay preaching, by numerous Sunday and day-schools, by the performance of Divine service during church hours, by causing the children who are taught in the Sunday-schools to attend the Methodist ministry, by administering the Holy Sacrament, not only to members of society, but to any persons religiously disposed in numerous chapels, by baptising children, by burying the dead, to draw away the community from, and to weaken the prejudice in favour of, a state religion, than any other section of the Christian church; and yet, in the face of this we are now to be told, that to sever the alliance of church and state "would destroy the framework of society." This, to us, appears the very climax of inconsistency. Persons, however, whether clerical or lay, who seriously entertain such sentiments, ought not merely to weep and lament at the mischief thus done by Methodism, but they ought most promptly and vigorously to commence repairing the breach which has been made, and which has been getting wider and wider for the last century. The recent overtures of the clergy of the state-made church ought to be embraced, and Wesleyanism for ever merged in the state religion. But, no! it is now too late to recede; the tide of public opinion has already set in with irresistible force; the efficiency of the voluntary principle has been fully demonstrated; the absurdity of a state religion, which, perchance, might be Heathenism, Mahomedanism, or Judaism, has been clearly developed, the unscriptural plan of state-making and state-paying the clergy has become abundantly apparent.

Now, the charge is, that the powers that be in the Wesleyan system have formed themselves into a political union, against the rights and liberties of their own people; and this we will demonstrate. What can a religious church relate to but a religious object? Does the Bible say anything about politics? Does the Bible speak about the connexion of church and state? Does it speak of a republic or a monarchy, as a proper government for a country? But the Wesleyan Conference

does all this. It has made itself a political union—yes, and the worst of all unions,—a tory political union, conservative and preservative of all existing corruption in church and state. The first is, that the Wesleyan Conference has declared, that certain political opinions are Wesleyan; the second is, that the Wesleyan Conference has expelled a man for holding certain political opinions. Its statement is, "That brother J. R. Stephens has attended four public meetings at Ashton-under-Lyne; one of the avowed objects of these meetings was to obtain the total separation of church and state; that, at these meetings he delivered speeches of his approbation of that object, and that these speeches of brother Stephens are directly at variance with the general sentiments of Mr. Wesley and the Conference, and are distinguished by spirit highly unbecoming a Wesleyan minister, and inconsistent with those sentiments of respect and affection towards the Church of England, which our Connexion from the beginning has openly professed and honourably maintained." It says, "that as far as his influence extends, brother Stephens has committed the character of the Connexion on a question involving its public credit, as well as internal tranquility." There is the separation of church and state set against the public credit of the Wesleyan Connexion. The proof of the second position is derived from the minutes, where it is stated, "that unless brother Stephens gives a distinct pledge that he will abstain from all such proceeding in future, he will unavoidably terminate his ministerial connexion with the Conference," that is to say, that the man who advocates opinions involving the separation of the church and state, is to be expelled from the Conference.

We impeach the Wesleyan Conference, in the name of the Methodist people, of having given the government of the country to understand that the Methodists were attached to the principle of a church establishment. It was a wilful and deliberate perversion of facts to say that the Methodist Connexion was an advocate for the union of church and state. But what, we would ask, was it come to this, that the worship of God was a political question; that the giving of the Holy Ghost by the imposition of hands was a political question; that the consecration of bishops, priests, and deacons, was a political question? What, was it come to this, that after our Saviour had, for eighteen hundred years and upwards, retired

from the scene of Calvary, the affairs of his church were to be considered *only* in the light of a political question? Then, shame upon his followers, if they did not speedily restore it to its original and spiritual character.

It is here that the stand is to be taken against the Wesleyan system and character; it is to be duly exposed, in order to its being successfully opposed. See the following paragraph as a specimen:—

"THE CHURCH AND THE METHODISTS.—On Wednesday week a public meeting (admission being by ticket) of the friends of the Protestant Association in Derby, was held in Christ Church, Burton-road, for the purpose of forming an auxiliary to the London Protestant Association, which was attended, according to the *Derby Mercury*, by at least 1,000 of the principal families in the town and neighbourhood. One of the principal speakers was the Rev. Edward Ford, Wesleyan minister in the town, who, after dilating at great length on the evils of Popery, concluded as follows:—The time was now come when the Protestant colours must be nailed to the mast. By those colours the Wesleyans would firmly stand and manfully fight. That body had been of late misunderstood by many of the clergy. The Wesleyans had been very erroneously classified with those Dissenters who, a few years ago, made an attack on the venerable establishment. *They had no sympathy with those parties.* They had no anti-church-rate or anti-tithe meetings whatever. He could not of course be answerable for individuals, but he spoke of the Wesleyans as a body of men when he said, that they admitted the *principle* of *an* established church. He should retire from that meeting to his own proper sphere; but if at any time his humble services should be again required in aid of the Established Church, they should be at the disposal of those who might request his assistance. The Wesleyans would not obtrude themselves on their notice; they would not assume a position in front of the church's phalanx; but they would use every proper means to oppose the growth of Popery, and to promote the well-being of the church as by law established. They would not fight their battles for them; but they would be to them, what the Prussians were at Waterloo; they would attack the enemy in flank, and help them to carry the victory. And, if required, they would fight with them in the last battle, and die with them in the last ditch. Mr. Ford was

followed by the Rev. Hugh M'Neile, who, instead of complimenting him, said—Read again the Articles of our church. If you do not agree with them, you *are* Dissenters; *you must not set up a church for yourselves.*"

Here is one of the order held harmless by the Wesleyan system while publicly "promoting the well-being of the church as by law established," while another (Mr. Stephens) was excommunicated for "promoting its separation." As far as Mr. Stephens is concerned, it is stated that he has committed the character of—what? of the Conference? No; but of the Connexion, and in a question which, it is stated, involves its public credit. But in what we have to state is to prevent, as far as it may be in our little power to prevent, the Methodist Connexion from stinking in the nostrils of the public, by proving that the Wesleyan system has committed itself, *not* the Connexion—that the Connexion is bound to vindicate itself.

Out of their mouths we will judge them. "The Conference gladly takes the present opportunity of publicly expressing its *entire satisfaction* with the *great principles* which have been ably and faithfully maintained during the past year, in the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, under Mr. Jackson's superintendence, and request that he will take the earliest opportunity of printing, in such a form as he may judge expedient, the substance of the statement which he has made to the Conference, *in illustration and conduct of Mr. Wesley*, and of the Conference since Mr. Wesley's removal from the head of our body, in relation to the *Established Church of Great Britain and Ireland, and to certain questions connected therewith.*" It is stated here that the principles which Mr. Jackson has defended, on the subject of church establishments, are the principles which the Connexion maintains. In this question are involved not only the preachers but the people. This is proved from the *Methodist Magazine.* "If, then, the Methodists, as a *body*, have not ranged themselves in the ranks of low dissent, and participated in the design of subverting the establishment, if they have invariably maintained a friendly position towards the church, it has been from a persuasion of the utility,"—mark, as a body, they are said to hold this persuasion,—"the utility, nay, under present circumstances, the *necessity* of an established religion, for securing to the nation such an amount of religious instruction, as could not be pro-

vided by merely voluntary efforts." That is one of the great principles which the Wesleyan Conference maintains. We say, does not that affect the people? Oh yes, as *a body*, we are to be on the side of an establishment. This political question has been made the principle of the Wesleyan Conference. Is this right—is this gospel—is this the religion of Jesus Christ? Anything but that. Is this consistent?

What, let us ask, is it that rendered the reformation memorable, and worthy of the gratitude of the real Christian? LUTHER, and he ought to know, tells us that the grand peculiar benefit of that event was the revival of the cardinal, the paramount doctrine of justification by faith alone in a crucified Redeemer. Now, we ask any one conversant with the ecclesiastical history of the last three centuries, whether it affords any good reason for believing that the clergy of the Church of England, any more than the priesthood of the Church of Rome, really entertain feelings of gratitude to Almghty GOD for the reformation, always supposing the estimate of the prince of reformers as to the benefits that accrued from that event to be correct? We confidently reply in the negative. We boldly charge it upon the great mass of the English clergy, that ever since the great doctrine of justification by faith was brought to light, and particularly since it was preached with so much clearness, power, and success, by the WESLEYS and WHITFIELD and their followers, they have carried on a perpetual crusade against it, and have done every thing in their power to root it out from the minds and hearts of the people.

So far as the Established Church of this country is concerned, Popery was not eradicated, but merely modified. To say that the Church of England is altogether as bad as the Church of Rome, would be an exaggeration of the fact; but it is no exaggeration—but the naked truth—to affirm that she has employed all her energies and all her wealth to undermine and destroy evangelical religion; the revival of which, by reviving that on which alone it can be founded, the scriptural doctrine of justification by faith, the reform promised. This she has attempted with as much determination, and nearly with as much success as Rome herself. She has not, indeed, taught her votaries to depend upon the performance of severe penances, munificent alms-deeds, the foundation of religious houses, the prayers of saints, or the prayers of survivors; she

has not taught her votaries, we say, to depend upon any of these things for salvation. But she has led them as effectually astray from the true foundation of a sinner's hope as if she had inculcated them all and several, as the means of attaining everlasting felicity. She has kept the atonement and merits of CHRIST completely out of sight, and has substituted in their stead mere external ceremonies, not always, nor nearly always, scriptural, and having no virtue in themselves if they were; and it is upon submission to certain ordinances, that she teaches her deluded disciples to rely for eternity. Nay, in the breasts of the most notorious profligates, she has, in innumerable instances, excited vain hopes of God's mercy, by giving them the Lord's supper on their death-beds, and pronouncing in their dying ears the absolution prayer. And yet her priests affect the greatest horror at the elevation of the Host, and presume to talk of the folly of extreme unction.

Only on this principle can we account for the church having selected the printing of the Scriptures in the English tongue for her war cry. Here we behold her brandishing, in the face of a rival imposter, a sword—"the sword of the spirit"—which is destined to be sheathed in her own bowels. How soon, who can tell?

We would warn the church not to beware of the principles of dissent, but *to beware of the Bible!* That is the great enemy it has to fear. It is that which has been the ruin of every national church yet—it is that which has produced all the great changes and reforms that have appeared in the Christian church yet. It overthrew Paganism—it split asunder Popery—it ruined Monkery in this country: it is destroying it elsewhere at this moment. The Catholics were deeper in worldly wisdom than the Church of England—they knew it to be an enemy, and they treated it as an enemy; they kept it down and out of sight as long as they could. Henry VIII, and Elizabeth were wiser in this respect than their successors. Henry passed an act in 1539, called the bloody statute, in which he decreed, that "no woman, artificers, apprentices, journeymen, husbandmen, or labourers, should read the New Testament"; and Elizabeth was equally averse to it. She did not wish the people to read it at all, least it should make them less submissive. She disliked even preaching, lest the mischievous principle of Christianity should steal abroad through it; three or four preachers in a

country she declared quite sufficient. Such was the policy of the catholic church, and of the cunning founders of the English church; but *now* this superannuated state church allows the Bible to walk abroad over the whole land, and then wonders to see it produce its natural effects. Oh! foolish and stiffnecked generation! wherever that book goes, there goes freedom of spirit and opinion: there the peasant learns to feel that he is a man, and the man that he is an immortal creature —the child of God—the heir of precious rights and a deathless hope; a being too good to be trodden on by priestly pride, or robbed by priestly pretences. It was because the peasants of Scotland had in every mountain glen and lowland hut listened to the animating topics and precious promises of the "big ha' Bible," that they rose and resisted to the death, and cast out of their borders, the bloody emissaries of this church. And, now, throughout England—in city and in hamlet, in field and forest, that great charter of man is studied, and will cast down every thing that is opposed to freedom of spirit and independence of purpose. Therefore, we would say to the Established Church—*beware of the* BIBLE.

But to John Wesley's successors in despotic power in Methodism we say nothing, perceiving no warning voice for them—it is now, "Ephraim *is* joined to idols: let him alone." —"And, thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shall be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day."—"But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." "Go and reason with the swine, lest he be rolled in the mire."

No one who was at all acquainted with ecclesiastical history would doubt that, in the early ages of the church, the gospel was preached as faithfully, as powerfully, and as effectually, as at any period of its history. How happened it, then, that in the second or third century the errors of the Papacy crept in and corrupted the church, and that monstrous abomination, that concentration of everything that was evil, blasting by its deadly influence the souls of men, while it impiously insulted the God of heaven, gained such a hold upon the nations of Christendom? It was the *unfaithfulness* of the members of the church who permitted the priests to assume powers, and

put forth pretensions inconsistent with the Word of God; and with their position, as the servants of the churches. The result was that the light of the gospel was extinguished in the churches of Europe, till you might have traversed almost the entire continent without finding a spot in which the pure faith was held; and, had it not been for the noble men of the valleys of Piedmont, who, chased from their homes by the dragoons of the Pope and the Emperor, carried with them and preserved, with sacred reverence, the living word of truth, till its light was once again kindled among the nations by the preaching of Luther and his associates, the light of Divine knowledge would have been extinguished.

And, if Methodism is ruined, the cause of it will be the *unfaithfulness* of its members, who permit its officials to put forth pretensions inconsistent with the Word of God. To the Wesleyan people we lift up the warning voice; to the *private members* the appeal is made and urged. "If, therefore, the light that is in thee be darkness, how great *is* that darkness! No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." You cannot serve *Jesus Christ* and *John Wesley* at one and the same time. John Wesley, in spirit, lives in his successors, the Wesleyan Conference, who are now become your tyrants, acting without regard to the laws, rights, or properties of the people. Your attention must be drawn to the fact, that the Wesleyan Conference has long since become a political union, to tyrannise over you as a body. That spirit has been developed more than forty years past. You shall have one proof of it. Its tyrannic conduct towards the local preachers, the most useful and honourable body in the Connexion. The law of the land exempting licensed teachers to serve in certain offices, the local preacher, by applying to a magistrate for a license, could claim that exemption. And who on earth was more worthy of it, labouring in his secular vocation six days in the week, and on the Lord's day had to walk from five to twenty miles to preach the glad tidings to his fellow-creatures without fee or reward. Yet, mark, did that political union, the Wesleyan Conference, in order to get in favour with the government, make a *law*, prohibiting the local preachers from exercising their right and privilege in that respect. From that period Wesley's system never could prosper. But what were the

people about at the same time? "Blame not heaven for your tyrants, blame yourselves." The private member who will give one penny per week and one shilling per quarter to support such a political union, forfeits his right to the privilege of ever hearing from the lips of a local brother the glad tidings of the Gospel, either for himself or his family. For many years past we have been glad when Conference time came, that we might be favoured to hear the local brethren, when the tyrants were off at their political union.

This political union of the Wesleyan system is formed and carried on to a greater and more formidable extent than most of the private members are at all aware of. This political union has long since been acting without regard to the properties of their own people, by whom they are *voluntarily* supported. It supports and upholds that system which is a "robbing by law," the church and state. Only look at it in some of its ramifications.

The political aspect of the Conference, the duties of the "Committee of Privileges," which had no existence as an appointment by the general body of the Wesleyans. That committee was appointed solely by the Conference, and it was not an uncommon thing for that committee to take action as the professed representatives of the Wesleyan body, to have communications with the government of the day in the name of the body, and to boast of being able to lay on the table of the House of Commons, in seven or ten days, signatures to the tune of half a million or a million in number. There never was since Methodism was founded such a thing as a society being called together for the purpose of giving its opinion as the agent of the committee in any way whatever. They were accustomed to go to chapel, never having heard of the petitions till they got to the door, and heard the preacher give his orders to sign them. As the representatives of the great body of Methodists, there was not a greater imposture in the world than the Wesleyan Methodist Committee of Privileges, and every man who allowed his name to be on that committee was a usurper of the rights of his fellow-men, imposed on the nation, and gave a lie to the world. It was well when the committee took any step politically, that the people should understand it was a great sham in reality, and that they received no authority whatever from the body itself. These statements were sufficient to show that the tyranny of

the Wesleyan Conference was not an accident, neither was it in isolated instances stretching a point. Conference tyranny is an evil which concerns the community at large. The members of the church on which it tramples have protested against it; but they have protested in vain. In vain, because John Wesley and his Conference rulers are men in whom the love of power has overmastered the love of principle, and engendered a disregard of every claim of others that interferes with self-gratification, and thwarts that corporate spirit which becomes so strong among men who please themselves with doing wrong to other men. Such a mode of proceeding is the foe of common humanity, and common humanity should unite to put it down. Men talk of Popery: here it is full blown. This is the justification of a separate organisation for the promotion of Methodist revolution.

The Wesleyan people want something sufficiently pointed and strong to move the *will*, and the work is done, the change is accomplished, the pocket is buttonedup. Thanks be, it is not yet Wesleyanism and state by law, although it is by intrigue, so far as Wesleyanism has it in its power. Brethren, you are bargained for—sold to the church and state government; the agreement is to serve each others turn, the sacrifice is your rights and property for their temporal use and enjoyment. For what else have Wesley's preachers been bringing up their sons to be state parsons. And you may have some idea of the extent of traffic, when about half-a-dozen of their presidents have had their sons church parsons; but what are they among so many hundred of them. And those sons of the preachers then become rooted and open enemies to Methodism. As a specimen—one of them aiming at preferment, to please his superiors, caused a Methodist chapel to be rased to the ground, it being within his jurisdiction. Then, there is the example for other men in Methodism to bring up their sons to the same trade. Think not lightly on those matters, on their immoral nature and tendency; think not that John Wesley's cloak can either hide them or save them. Think of the persecuting spirit of the Wesleyan Conference, who have identified themselves with Popish priests in Protestant pay; this spirit is now patent to all, without prying into the craft. You are under a mistake if you think that it is only Methodist reformers who find out faults, and lodge complaints. Witness the host of every class

of Dissenters, to whom injustice have been done by those church and state-going Wesleyans, and have respect to the views of the well-informed and generous, though not Dissenters. Take the following as a specimen:—

"Could the Methodists, indeed, be invested by some revolution with the absolute power which Rome once possessed, there is reason to fear that, unless checked by the genius of a humane age, the CONFERENCE would equal Rome itself in the spirit of persecution."—LORD JOHN RUSSELL, *Memoirs of the Affairs of Europe.*

Let us not be thrown off our guard by an overweening trust in the increased enlightenment of our times. "A corrupt tree cannot but bring forth evil fruit." The Wesleyan system *is* a corrupt tree, and its fruit, therefore, must be evil. This is what has to be demonstrated; and we must do it, not logically only—not by showing that vileness in the fruit is the necessary consequence of vileness in the plant—but by actually exhibiting to the senses of mankind the foul, fœtid, and rotten produce. Then only shall we convince honest minds of every degree, from the lowest grade of practical simplicity to the highest order of argumentative apprehensiveness, that "Methodism as it is" is evil—only evil—and that continually. But, it must be the business to make the whole thing visible to all; the mystery of iniquity works, and we must expose its workings. There is something so irresistible in truth that it at once convinces the understanding, and forces a passage to the heart. In vain does the hypocrite attempt to imitate this amiable virtue, or endeavour to impose upon the credulous by the fabrications of deceit; for he is generally caught in the intricate trammels of invention, and it is not easy to say whether he is most condemned or despised. The temper of WESLEY lives in his successors of the nineteenth century; and, we may rely upon it, that temper will loose no opportunity of displaying itself in corresponding acts. We see this temper incarnate in their taking side with the state church. It is the genius that inspires the Wesleyan Conference. Like the legion in the herd of swine, it is fast hurrying it to the brink of destruction; but, for its most outrageous features, we must recur to its first principles, we must search the pages of history and collect its fellest rage.

Protestant Church of England, what did it protest against? Was there ever a more sturdy thief than this same establish-

ment? but it was a "murderer" as well as a "thief." Did it not by its heads, its nursing fathers and nursing mothers, Henry VIII, Edward VI, Elizabeth, and the Stuarts, put to death and persecute numbers of those whose consciences could not submit to its dictation? And, did it not seize upon and monopolise the very heritage of the poor, for whom it now pretends so much compassion? These church-rates they tell us are for the benefit of the poor, that they may come and hear the gospel "without money and without price." Is a tenth of the produce of the soil, an income of the church, *no money and no price.* We think this a considerable price, especially when a great part of it was plunder from these very poor themselves. The Catholics who raised the money, who built and endowed these churches, were charitable people. In their days, before Henry VIII and his *reformed* church had laid violent hands on their property, there was abundant provision for the poor. Wherever the poor were, wherever they went, the doors of abbeys and alms-houses were open to afford them money, provisions, medicines, and other comforts. The revenues derived from tithes were divided into four parts —one for the clergy, one for the repair and maintenance of the church buildings, and one for the pilgrim and stranger, and one for the poor. This was the case in Catholic days; but whenever Henry VIII, and his new church, seized upon these revenues, what did they do? They took all and divided it amongst his satellites; the body of the church took all the rest and divided it amongst its satellites. *It took the money for the repair of the churches, and the money for the poor, and threw both the churches and the poor upon the country.* Let it then for ever be borne in mind *that church-rates and poor-rates were first made necessary in this country by this church.*

It was not content with robbing, but proceeded to wet its hands in the blood of the free-minded and conscientious Henry VIII put numbers to death for conscience sake. At one time he burned six persons at once, half Papists and half Protestants, tieing a Protestant and Papist, arm to arm. The Papists he killed because they did not go far enough for him, and the Protestants, because they went too far. Edward VI, his son, instigated by Archbishop Cranmer, burnt Joan Bocher, and Van Paris. Elizabeth, it is well known, proceeded in the same course, hanging, burning, and imprisoning for conscience sake, so that, says

Neale, they died in their dungeons like rotten sheep. The Stuarts followed this bloody system up; and not content with dealing out ecclesiastical murders here, extended their atrocities to their own country (Scotland), pursuing the people like wild beasts into the mountains, in order to compel them to partake of the blessings of this compassionate church. After the Stuarts had been driven out of the kingdom for their tyrannies, and recalled again, they renewed all their cruelties in behalf of this church. De Lolme, the historian, states, that between the restoration of Charles II, and the revolution of King William, *sixty thousand persons* suffered severely for conscience sake, of whom *five thousand* died in prison. At one time, this merciful church had almost every full-grown Quaker in the kingdom in prison. This persecuting spirit still exists in this church. Only some few years since, a Mr. Childs, of Bungay, was *imprisoned* for church-rates; and a Mr. Williams, of Carlow, a Friend, was *imprisoned* for *tithes*, and only liberated out of the vindictive clutches of the clergy, by a special act of parliament. We say vindictive, because in both cases there was abundant property to distrain upon; but these spiritual Shylocks would have their "*pound of flesh.*"

The state church is still characterised by the same spirit and mode of proceeding. Into whose cornfield has has it not entered and taken away the tenth sheaf? Whose field or whose garden has it not plundered? Whose pig-stye has it not ransacked? Whose hen-roost has it not scaled? Whose apple-tree has it not robbed? And, has it spared the poor? Let poor Watson, the shoemaker, whom it persecuted and imprisoned for some few pence of Easter-dues (so called), answer this. Let Jeremiah Dodsworth and his fellow-labourers answer this. These poor labouring men were charged by the Rector of Lockington, in Yorkshire, in 1833, a *tithe upon their wages;* this greedy parson demanded a tithe upon their hard-earned wages; his own living, by his own confession, in the *Liber Ecclesiasticus*, being £532! And because Jeremiah Dodsworth refused to pay this iniquitous demand, another clergyman committed him to the house of correction, at Beverley, for three months! And let the poor tailor, at Ripon, and all the poor people there, that have been harrassed by the dean and chapter, and their lawyer, for a tithe upon their milk, join him.

But it is not merely the annoyance of being forced to pay small tithes, as they are termed—tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin—that we wish to fix attention, but the enormous, if not the incalculable, amount of the people's property that is claimed by the state church. It claims a tenth—but a a tenth of what?—of the farmer's estate, say of 100 acres, and the parson to have ten acres for his share. Oh, no! The farmer must cultivate that ten acres, provide manure for it, purchase seed for it, and produce it ripe to perfection to the parson's hand; which, if calculated, and that within bounds, would be equal to a seventh part of the farmer's estate, instead of the tenth. So that the nation is swallowed up once in every seven years by those wolves in sheep's clothing, for riding to the devil after a pack of fox hounds, forsooth! But there is yet a worse feature in the dark scene. Who but knows that those church livings are bought and sold in the market; knocked down to the highest bidder by the auctioneer; and yet those state parsons are obliged to make a solemn declaration, equal to an oath, that they give nothing for the benefice, either directly or indirectly, *i.e.*, either themselves or any person for them. And those very parsons will say to the farmer—"Oh, how must I not raise the tithes on you; I gave £200 more for it than my predecessor did." We can but call this downright perjury—shocking to think of—such declaring, that "they are moved by the Holy Ghost" to take on them the sacred office of the ministry of the Gospel.

And, lo and behold! this is but a very slender and imperfect sketch of the "apostolic church," from which John Wesley would not allow the Methodist people to separate. To dwell on Wesley's inconsistency therein, is the pith of our subject. However, one thing we desire to remind our readers of before we finally conclude,—the wide difference between the church as an establishment, and the church as a body of worshippers. Some parties always try to confound these two essentially different things; but he who cannot see the distinction, must have a most uncommon skull. It is against the establishment alone that we make war; and it is for the rights of the church, as a body of people, that we contend as earnestly, as for the rights of the Dissenters. Against that institution that imposes tithes, church-rates, Easter-offerings, and pays parsons in all their multifarious characters of bishops, deans, and deacons, parish priests, curates, &c., out of them,

without the consent, and in spite of the people, we protest; against that body that *worships only*, we have no quarrel. It is for this body, in fact, that we contend. We would restore to them their undoubted right to choose their own ministers. We would leave the disposal of the church property to the wisdom of the nation; assured of one thing, that were it taken from the Episcopalians, the Dissenters would have none of it. Our concern is, to see that every body of Christians have full freedom to choose and maintain their forms of worship in their own way. And we hope to see the day when the people of the church, so called, will thank us as their best friends, who have striven to free them from the thraldom of the state, and the wretched hirelings imposed upon them by patrons. Let that day once come, and then will the church flourish as the Dissenters flourish. Every parish will chose its own pastor, and every honest, pious, clergyman will have a chance of being chosen: all the host of imbecile, dissipated, and worldly aristocrats being removed out of their way. This is the end we aim at—the freedom and prosperity of Christ's religion; and he who aims at any end less pure, less disinterested, less noble, deserves not the name of man. This is the end we aim at; and, this end once attained, then will commence those internal reforms and adaptations to the advanced knowledge of the times. Then will those reforms commence, which none but the members of the church themselves have the least conceivable right to introduce. Then will the objectionable parts be struck out of its creed, and its otherwise fine ritual; and so splendid and animating would be the change with all these fine spirits that would rise into its pulpits from the halls of purified and unshackled universities, and at the call of a free people, that thousands would flock into it, and we should go thither too, if it were only to witness that great, that glorious and Christian revolution, for which many had laboured, and for which they had suffered calumny and shame.

Before we proceed with our present work, a direct attack on the Wesleyan system; we have one other observation to make respecting the state church. These people always take care *to leave out one little fact*, which creates the distinction between corporate and private property. Private property, when granted by government, is granted for the sole use and benefit of the person himself; but all corporate property is

granted not for the sole use and benefit of the corporation, whether it be a church or lay body, but *for public purposes. Here is the grand and eternal distinction ;* and people have only to keep this simple distinction firmly before them, to see the sophistry of all party argument that can be brought forward. Corporate property is given for a public purpose, and whenever government conceives that purpose absurd, nullified, or is a purpose no longer desirable, it can undoubtedly recall the grant.

Therefore, we Methodists, as Dissenters, have an undoubted right with other Dissenters to use all the constitutional means in our power to oppose and put down the Established Church. And that the Methodists are *Dissenters* see the following extract:—

WESLEYAN METHODISTS' DISSENTERS.

The following is extracted from a pamphlet by the well-known THOMAS TAYLOR, who was twice chosen President of Conference :—

"It has been observed, that Mr. Wesley was educated in high church principles, and was strongly attached to them, till God taught him better. He retained all the fundamental doctrines of the church to the end of his life ; he also loved the liturgy of the church, for the most part, especially the prayers; but he certainly was under a necessity to act as a Dissenter in many respects, or he would have done very little good—he would have been tied hand and foot. But that he acted as a Dissenter is certain, and he is obliged tacitly to acknowledge it in several instances. Indeed, the canons* require so strict obedience from every clergyman to their ordinary, that almost every step Mr. Wesley has taken has been in opposition thereunto.

"1st. By preaching in all parts of England, both in the open air and in houses, without license from any bishop or archbishop.

* "Let one canon speak for many. Canon 12.—'Whosoever shall affirm that it is lawful for any sort of ministers or lay persons to make rules, orders, and constitutions, in causes ecclesiastical, without the King's authority, and shall submit to be ruled and governed by them, let him be excommunicated *ipso facto*, and not restored but only by the archbishop, after his repentance and public revocation of his wicked error.' Thus we see that Mr. Wesley was liable to a most terrible excommunication, for he made rules without the King's authority."

"2nd. By erecting societies, independent of the bishops, and bringing them under rules and discipline of his own.

"3rd. By having chapels built, and preaching and administering the Lord's Supper in them, without their being consecrated.

"4th. By admitting men to preach who were not ordained by a bishop; calling a synod every year, and calling every preacher to an account concerning his conduct and doctrine, and then appointing them their destination the ensuing year; sending them into all parts of the land, yea, and into other lands also; a more extensive jurisdiction than any bishop ever assumed, except the Bishop of Rome.

"5th. By formally ordaining men, not only to preach, but also to administer the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

"6th. By constantly preaching and administering the Lord's Supper in those Dissenting chapels in Spitalfields, West-street, and the City-road, when in London.

"If all this does not make a man a Dissenter, it is hard to tell what does. Nay, I will appeal to all the universities in Christendom, and to all the divines and civilians in the land; and if they will not announce Mr. Wesley, and all the preachers in connexion with him, Dissenters, I will promise to preach no more.

"Nay, we cannot preach but as Dissenters; we are liable to fine, and the houses in which we preach are liable to be fined, as well as our hearers, without being licensed, yea, and licensed as Dissenters; nay, Mr. Wesley himself was liable to this, and so is every clergyman who goes beyond the bound of his jurisdiction. It was but a little before Mr. Wesley's death that he knew all this, and admired the Providence of God that we have been so favourably dealt with, seeing matters stood thus. That Mr. Wesley was thus a Dissenter will be a matter of praise to thousands; that he denied himself to be in any wise such was his weakness, and laid him under much inconvenience.

"It may not be amiss just to notice some of the most plausible objections against that liberty of conscience for which we plead. 'It is contrary to Mr. Wesley's rule!' Suppose it is, if it be not contrary to God's rule, what great harm is there in the matter? Mr. Wesley never avowed himself to be infallible. I think his rule was, *Be ye followers of me, as*

I am of Christ. But then we deny the fact. Show us the rule: or what rule do you mean? Do you mean the rules of the society? There is not a word about the church in them. Do you mean the poll deed enrolled in the High Court of Chancery, declaring what the Conference, or what the Methodists are? There is not a word of the church named there. Is it Mr. Wesley's will you call his rule? We do not find the word church in it. Is it in the letter which he left to be opened and read in the Conference, after his death? There is not a word about the church even in that rule either. Now, had there been any such rule as ye mention, we should have found it in some of the above, especially in the two former, seeing the one is what every member of the society is obliged to walk by, and conform to, and the other is what gives them a character—a reality in law. 'Well, but he always exhorted to go to the church and sacrament, and advised the Methodists never to leave the church.' So you say. But, if those assertions of yours be contradicted by Mr. Wesley's well-known practice, you will bring no small censure either on Mr. Wesley or yourselves. Has not Mr. Wesley acted as a Dissenter in London these forty years? Has he not preached and administered the Lord's Supper in Spitalfields and West-street chapels all those years? or in the Foundry, or New Chapel? And were not all these Dissenting chapels? They never were consecrated; the Bishop of London had nothing to do with them any more than he had with the Jewish synagogue. Did not the other preachers, in connexion with Mr. Wesley, preach in those chapels, and in church hours too, in Mr. Wesley's absence? Did Mr. Wesley ever go to the church in London, except he has been invited to preach occasionally in some church? Did he not preach at Bristol in the church hours? Did he not preach, and administer the Lord's Supper, the last Leeds Conference, in church hours? Yes, on the first Sunday in the month, just in sight of the parish church. Was not that dissenting? Has he not established a religious economy or order, and admitted and sent a number of preachers all over the three kingdoms, as well as into America, and the West Indies? Did he not summon those preachers once a year to meet him in conference? And did he not call them to an account respecting their life and doctrine? Could he do all this as a Churchman? Who gave him any such power, or who could do it, as a Churchman? Has he not even

formally ordained several of the preachers, and made them promise that they would administer the Lord's Supper? Could he or they do this except as Dissenters? Are not many of the chapels and preachers licensed as Dissenting chapels and Dissenting ministers? And are not both chapels and ministers liable to be fined if they are not so licensed? Is it, then, agreeable to truth for the preachers to enter themselves as Dissenting teachers, if they are not so? Or is it agreeable to gospel simplicity to enter the chapels as Dissenting meeting-houses, if they are not so? But indeed they must be so, seeing it is the statute in that case provided, which must characterise them. The Act of Toleration, which obtains the license, is expressly made for Protestant Dissenters; and, if they are not such, why do they equivocate? And, if they are, why do they deny it? Therefore, Mr. Wesley, and all who have laboured in communion with him, must have acted as Dissenters, whether they have done right or wrong; and we sincerely thank God that they ever did so, seeing many thousands have been savingly brought to God by that means. The case with Mr. Wesley was this, he was brought up in high-church principles, and retained them till God taught him better. Nevertheless, he loved the doctrines of the church, and the liturgy, especially the prayers; but it is certain he did not submit to the hierarchy of the church any more than myself. Indeed, he could not; the station in which Providence had placed him was such, that he must either disobey God or man: he choose the latter, and therefore was a Dissenter. The moment he set up the standard in Moorfields, and collected a society, he was a Dissenter; and such was the following part of his life, for which thousands will have reason to praise God to all eternity."

Yet, in the face of these *facts*, such was the amazing inconsistency of John Wesley, that he lived and died declaring that the Methodists should not separate from the Established Church; and such was the monstrous influence of his example on his successors in the ministry, as a body, that they have ever declared that the Wesleyan Methodist people were *not* Dissenters, but that they were favourable to the establishment. But that Wesley's inconsistency, and that of his successors, does not affect the *fact* of the case, every one can but see, and is forced to acknowledge.

Therefore, let the Wesleyan Methodists only attempt to act on that knowledge; let them join together to petition the government of the country to remove the impost—the Established Church. What would be the immediate result on the part of Wesley's successors? Direct and the strongest opposition. And men who have all the power to govern and rule the Wesleyan people, what could withstand their opposition? There is only one remedy that can be used for the people's defence, and that is, a *revolution*, which is the most reasonable remedy that can be conceived, and also the easiest. It is *only* "button up your pockets," yea, sew them up with everlasting material, against all tyrants. You should, as you respect yourselves, never attempt the use of any other weapons. Counter petitions in favour of the establishment would be circulated; only laugh at them. Hear no speeches, nor answer any questions. Should the itinerant preachers ask and implore for help, send them to their friends, the establishment; and should they be in want themselves, why then let them cry together for help to their god; and if you can find it in your heart earnestly to exhort them, you can do so, to "Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, *or* peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked."

But never attempt to reason with them, or to complain to them: but, you are at liberty to petition the government of the land against any grievance of a national character. Christianity does not merely conform to existing political conditions; it does more—it contributes to the due development of all the practical elements existing in society, and, consequently, to that of democracy among the rest. Christianity is not hostile to any of the political forces; but it is incessantly correcting their excesses, and controlling their disproportionate manifestations. It would be well for Methodism and the world if the various elements which she possessed, were allowed to act their proper and appropriate parts in her political system. Wisdom and justice alike demand it. But the Wesleyan Conference, by continuance of that blind infatuation which has long characterised their general policy, having refused to render Wesleyan Methodism less rigid and popular, its destruction is inevitable.

But the people can save themselves—rescue Methodism from destruction, and make it a general blessing to the country;

this must be done independent of the stationed preachers, yea, in spite of them. On any emergency, the Wesleyan Methodist, alone, with their congregations, might be enabled to send petitions to parliament to the number of 200,000 of signatures, and if only one-half of that number were qualified as votes for members to the House of Commons, it might greatly assist to decide an important national question, either for good or evil. Shall those very persons, who are voluntarily supported, like gentlemen, by the people, be allowed in any way to interfere with what the people themselves regard as their national rights and privileges, whether it regards the separation of church and state, or any other great question. These men, bringing up their sons to be church parsons, to share the national plunder, and to curry favour with the government on their own account also, having an eye to preferment. Such men, bent only on their own interest, and to promote that interest would not hesitate to sacrifice the people, and their property, and everything that is dear to them. If you would not sign your own death-warrant, never sign a petition of any kind, that they may bring forward. To be safe, you must always suspect treason, or else you would be enslaved, and sold, and ruined. But to make safe and short work of it, the *supplies* mnst be *stopped* at *once* and *for ever*. Remember, those Wesleyan parsons, as yet, have no act of parliament to compel you ; they cannot distrain on your property, they cannot send you to prison to suffer, and to die. But we verily believe with Lord John Russell, that they would be capable of doing all this.

But whose fault shall it be if they are permitted to commit another act of injustice against yourselves or your families. You need not wait for any fresh act of theirs. Only acquaint yourselves with a law which has existed in their statute book for above fifty years. " Let no man, nor number of men in the Methodist Connexion, on any account or occasion, circulate letters, call meetings, do or attempt to do anything new, until it has first passed the Conference." If this law, enforced, does not demand an immediate and complete *revolution*, what does ?

Peradventure this Methodism is the image of the beast, that we read of ; but, admitting that the people in Wesley's day gave to him the power he possessed and exercised, there are several questions arising out of this admission which break in

upon our minds. First, Had the people any right, as Christians, to place such power in the hands of a mortal, though for holiness and usefulness he might claim an affinity to apostolic days? And, secondly, Had Mr. Wesley any business to accept of such a boon? Respecting the first question we may observe, that it is clear from the New Testament that the whole church is the divinely constituted depositary of power, to be exercised by it, as circumstances may call for, in complete submission to the written word. So far as the exercise of discipline is concerned, it does appear a right belonging, not to any officers whatever, whether lay or clerical, as distinct from the members of the church: officers, whether lay or clerical, and private members, being, in this matter, on a perfect equality. That this equality existed in the primitive church by mere sufferance, cannot be modestly assumed; while the circumstance of it being sanctioned by the written word, goes to prove that the Holy Ghost considered the power as less liable to abuse, by being placed in the whole church, than by its being deposited in the hands of the officers. The Methodists and others, who have left the sole management of the affairs of the church in the hands of their officers, have so far surrendered that for which they are responsible to the head of the church; and have thus left the plain, level, beaten track in which the apostles and first Christians walked, and placed themselves in the road leading to the completest ecclesiastical tyranny. From these remarks we infer that the people in Wesley's day had no right to give up a power into the hands of one man, which God never designed should be possessed by less than the whole church. As to the second question, we may observe, that the remarks just made show forth that he had no right whatever to accept of a power so vast; and, admitting, for argument sake, that Mr. Wesley never did abuse the power thus placed in his keeping, still his consenting to have this power established a precedent, by which some of his crafty successors might climb to the pinnacle of sovereignity, and become lords over God's heritage. As there is strong evidence of this having transpired, it cannot but be deeply regretted that Mr. Wesley ever set such a precedent. But, supposing that in Methodism "as it was" we see the decisions of a whole generation, now sleeping till the heavens and earth shall be no more, shall the decisions of a past generation be binding on the present, though their work-

ings be evidently fraught with evil? Certainly not: hence we are of those who believe that what our eyes have seen, and our ears have heard, of the irresponsible power assumed by the preachers in modern Methodism, is nothing but the fruit of the tree of Methodistic discipline, set by the hands of John Wesley, growing to perfection.

It has been said, of all despotisms in the universe the undivided, unchecked power of one chamber, one aggregate body, is the most certain, the most fearful, the most crushing. A *unit* is a fearful power, bad enough in *one* tyrant; but, when existing in a conclave, a council, a conference, it is next to infinity: nobody can resist—except by a *revolution*, the one only happiness left in such a case.

Looking at John Wesley's character, the cause and basis of the Wesleyan system in the government of the Methodist church, it must be perceivable, that it is not only laudable and commendable, but that it becomes an imperative duty, on the part of the people to revolutionise this anti-Christian system with promptitude. John Wesley must be regarded as the head of the "political union" in the system of Wesleyan Methodism. To propose maxims of civil polity in a religious assembly, to propose maxims of religion in a political assembly, are two things which seem alike senseless and imprudent. But the Wesleyan Conference are guilty of upholding and supporting those two things. The Christian is so often distinguished from the statesman, that it would seem they were opposite characters. But John Wesley was one of those inconsistent men whom the finest genius cannot preserve from self-contradiction, and whose opposite qualities will always leave us in doubt whether to place them in one extreme or in another diametrically opposite. On the one hand, he was a great philosopher, and knew how to distinguish truth from falsehood, for he could see at once a connexion of principles and a train of consequences; on the other hand, he was a great sophister, endeavouring to confound truth with error, to wrest principles, and to force consequences. In one view, admirably learned and of fine parts, having profited much by the labours of others, and, perhaps, more by the exercise of his own great sense; in another view, ignorant, or affecting to be ignorant, of the most common things, advancing arguments which had been a thousand times refuted, and starting objections which the greatest novice in the church

durst not have mentioned without blushing. On the one hand, encountering the greatest men, opening a wide field for them to labour in, leading them into devious paths, and, if not going beyond them, giving them a world of pains to keep pace with him; on the other hand, quoting mean geniuses, offering a profusion of incense to them, blotting his writings with names that should never have been pronounced by Christian learned lips. On the one hand, free, at least in appearance, from every disposition contrary to the spirit of the Gospel, chaste in his manners, grave in his conversation, temperate in his diet, and austere in his usual course of life; on the other, upholding and supporting the very set of men who employ all the acuteness of their genius to oppose good morals, and attack modesty, and all other Christian virtues. Sometimes appealing to a tribunal of the most rigid orthodoxy, deriving arguments from the purest sources, and quoting divines of the most unsuspected soundness in the faith: at other times, relative to the government of the church —travelling in the highroad of heretics, reviving the objections of ancient heresiarchs, forging them new armour, and uniting in one body the errors of past ages with those of the present time. O that this man, who was endowed with so many talents, may have been forgiven by God for the bad use he made of them! May that Jesus, whose authority he usurped, and whose word he perverted, have expiated his criminal errors. But, though charity constrains us to hope and wish for his salvation, the honour of our holy religion obliges us publicly to declare that he abused his own understanding; to protest before heaven and earth, that we disown him as a member of our reformed churches, and we shall always consider a part of his writings as a scandal to good common sense, and as a pest to the Methodist church.

Having attempted a sketch of Wesley's portrait, we would now repeat,—if that is the outline, what must the filling up be? Well may it be exclaimed, "who can understand his errors?" But, broad general principles, or outlines, are indispensable; they are the first things to be learned, and most easily understood; they are sketches which include everything; whereas, little facts are merely the tracery or gingerbread work which embellish or belong to fractional parts of the building. By trying to particularise these we lose the power of classification, or of appreciating great collective truths and facts. Who,

we would ask, that understands John Wesley's character and influence, in and over Methodism, would hesitate to pronounce him as the greatest enemy, instrumentally, that ever existed, or that ever can exist, against Methodism; he having done all that lay in his power, to prevent the Methodist church from exercising its rights and duties to correct and prevent error—the *glory* was left without *defence.* Let the anti-Christian systems in Methodism be overturned, then we would most gladly and quietly drop Wesley's name.—But it *is Wesleyan* Methodism—*Wesleyan* Association—*Wesleyan* Reformers—*Wesleyan* Free Methodists, &c., &c. But such is our littleness, when we lose sight of a thing, we think it ceases to be. When we find the art of forgetting truth, it should seem truth is no more. When we cease thinking of our judge, it seems to us there is no judge. We resemble children who shut their eyes to hide themselves from their nurses. We should look at cause and effect in John Wesley's system of church-government. Yes! he has been at the root of Methodism *as it is*; the cause of its ruinous errors. But, prospectively, we find, as already referred to, something like a severe scriptural test, where it is said,—*Every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.* Thus, it would appear, the chief design of the day of judgment is to examine the actions of men, and to distinguish bad actions from good, and good from better. This is an idea contained in a thousand passages of scripture. The apostle pursuing the metaphor adds: *If any* man's work abide, which he hath *built thereupon, he shall receive a reward;* but if his doctrine *burns,* if it will not abide this trial, if it be like the foreign matter mixed with gold, and which burns when gold is tried with fire, then the preacher will lose the honour and pleasure of his work, he will have no reward for his ministerial service; but as to himself, perhaps he may be saved, however, he will be saved with difficulty: *he will be saved as by fire.* Why may he be saved? Because his doctrine did not go to the subversion of the principal truths of the Christian religion. Why will he be saved with difficulty? Because it is possible, that the motive which induced him to preach and declare such a doctrine, and to prefer it before what St. Paul compared to *gold,* and *precious stones,* may have been so detestable as to deserve all the

punishments denounced against such as shall have subverted the foundations of the Gospel—*saved as by fire.* But we judge nothing—we decide nothing. But did he feel he had done wrongly, yea, rashly, in taking the future destiny of multitudes of human beings into his own fallible hands ?

It is uncalled for here to attempt to show the light side of Wesley's portrait, whose praise is in every one's mouth, and justly so, as " he that acts worthily deserves praise." Relative to doctrine, it is the writer's fervent apprehension of Wesley's great and pure genius, that would deter him from giving vent to his admiration of its truthful character. We should fear to touch, lest we should desecrate; and, perhaps, it may be a wholesome fear. But we would be most desirous to follow Wesley, so far as he followed Christ. We may not fully understand his scriptural character here, but we feel it, and are disposed most sincerely not only to strive for it for ourselves, but to attempt to provoke others to the same contention. We should take heed that we be found profiting by his work of faith and labour of love. Useful knowledge may be acquired from his writings in general. His sermons would have the tendency to clear the head and better the heart. His work on Christian perfection should not only be read, but understood by every Methodist. But as to his collection of Hymns, so well known, they need no recommendation—they recommend themselves, as containing all the important truths of our most holy religion, whether speculative or practical. " So that this book is, in effect, a little body of experimental and practical divinity." Next to the poetry of the Scriptures, we admire and love it. It is expressive of the *glory* of our Methodism, which we, as a people, are now called on to defend. And in opposing the corruptions of the Methodist church, we are prepared to defend to the utmost of our power the capital doctrines of Christianity, which the Methodist church teaches, and which we firmly believe to be according to the Word of God. Thus we will with one hand smite, and smite unsparingly, all corruption; but with the other we will hold forth the Gospel of salvation as altogether worthy of the acceptance of all the nations of the earth. Do you really believe that men politically opposed instruct or convert each other by argument? Never! Each adheres but the more closely to his opinion and party. The true spirit of Church Reform was a spirit of love, breathing goodwill, brotherly affection to all, and a spirit

of irresistible power, which just required to be awakened to vindicate the honour of the Lord Jesus, and rescue his church for ever from her bondage. How, then, shall we arouse this mighty spirit? This is the problem which we have to solve now. Shall it be by telling you of your grievances, and stimulating you by a mere paltering zeal for the political aggrandisement of your party, or by a little querulous spirit of complaint against your official brethren? No, truly: this is not the way to call forth the mighty spirit of Church Reform which we now want. We shall tell you rather of the grievance of another party, namely, of Him whose law has been violated, whose people have been oppressed, and who, in this case, must needs be the principal party aggrieved. It was such a view that let David to exclaim—"*It is* time for *thee*, LORD, to work: *for* they have made void thy law." Would you not feel your zeal quickened, when you are reminded of the self-denial of Him who, though rich, for your sakes became poor—of Him who, though Creator of all, sat weary and hungry at the well of Samaria—of Him who, though Lord of glory, submitted even to the death of the cross! It is He that makes an appeal to your *will* through your understanding. In effect, he says—Is it nothing to you that I am wounded in the house of my friends? Is it nothing to you whether immortal souls are saved or left to perish? Will *ye*, who are under such infinite obligations to come up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty, remain indifferent and inactive, saying by such conduct "Am I my brother's keeper?"—*ye*, who have been justified freely, and sanctified wholly, by faith in me: *ye*, who acknowledge, that "The arms of love that encompass me, would all mankind embrace": *ye*, who freely receive, *commanded* freely to give: *ye*, who are called to be lights of the world, and of the church, will *ye also go away* and leave the world and the church in darkness, in *doomed* darkness: *you*, as a people that have been exalted to heaven in privileges —the privileges of *getting the most good*, and of *doing the most good*. Will *ye also grieve the Spirit*—will *ye also quench* the *Spirit*? *Will you also go away*? Will *you* abandon me? *To whom alone shall we go, Lord*? *Thou* alone hast the words of eternal life. None can teach the *doctrines* of salvation but thyself; and none can confer the gift of eternal life but thou alone.

We shall ever have to remind ourselves that the Lord helps those who help themselves, that while we look to the strong for strength, we must put our shoulder to the work. Much as we deprecate controversy, and especially when it leads unto bitter ill-will and personality, there can be but one opinion, namely,—that the Ruler of the universe has often over-ruled it for the eventual benefit of mankind. We may instance the period of the reformation, and the effects then accomplished, as an example of the mode in which our Heavenly Father is pleased to preserve true religion. It must be granted that free and temperate discussion is the surest method of arriving at truth. We do not assert that the spirit of controversy is not susceptible of abuse; but we maintain, that if it be carried on temperately, judiciously, prayerfully, much good ensues. These remarks are applicable to the means by which the Christian inquirer is enjoined to prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good. As Christians, we must not forget, that it is incumbent on each one of us to *search* the Scriptures. Each man is responsible for his own faith. The same material is given to all, from which alone that faith is to be derived. And as, in this world, we should merit any misfortunes caused by blindly placing our worldly possessions in the hands of another, so will it be no excuse to urge that we have followed this or that man in matters connected with the salvation of our souls. To each of us is entrusted the keeping of his immortal soul; each of us is bound to make the best use of his own opportunities; and each of us will have to render an account of himself to God. Though justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne, yet let us remember clouds and darkness are round about him. God is not capricious, nor arbitrary in his mode of working; but it does not follow that his reasons for working, or his designs in working, can always be understood. Many of God's dealings are inexplicable to us, and will remain so till we know even as we are known. Often God's ways are a great deep. The laws which influence him cannot always be ascertained; the ends he has in view cannot always be discovered; the wisdom of his ways is not always apparent. "Such knowledge is too wonderful for us; it is high, we cannot attain it." Yet the laws by which he governs his operations are holy, just, and good; his ends are always benevolent, his wisdom is immutably perfect. It is right for us to trace all these as far as our limited capacity

will lead us; and when we come to a place impassable and impenetrable by human footstep, let us remember the words of inspiration,—who by searching can find out God, who can find the Almighty to perfection?

Therefore, we must and can say, in the present controversy, that, where we cannot trace him, we can and do trust him. One part of the work is that the people be brought to trust in him also. Granted, that this is a great work indeed, to enter so fully into the controversy as shall lead to a complete revolution of all the existing systems of Methodism. And here is the formidable difficulty: the attacking the whole of the officials, stationed and local, and that practically; for as it was at the great reformation, so is it now. Of Luther's sentiments we read. His opposition to *the church* was now about to create him enemies, because it was no longer to be confined to theory. But Luther was not to be stopped; and would give no other reply than that, "if the cause were not of God it would fall, but if it were of God its progress could not be resisted." In his letters to Melancthon we find him saying: "For the glory of the Scriptures, and the consolation of mankind, I would rather submit to a violent death than you should think me languid in the cause. Even though I should perish, the Word of God shall not perish; and you, I hope, like another Elisha, would succeed Elijah." And of Wickliff, we read, exasperated at his treatment, he threw of all restraint, and attacked monks and friars, inferior and exalted clergy, not omitting the Popedom itself, he then actually exposed the general ignorance; and not only exhorted the laity to study the Scriptures, but himself translated them into English, in order to render their perusal more universal.

But now-a-days, in these enlightened times, when everyone is ready to join the general cry against Popery and against priestcraft, the Scriptures become their boast, in their mouth, at their fingers' ends, and ready to be dealt out on any occasion, however varied the circumstances— to say nothing of the great wisdom of the officials in the church—yet who among the people is willing to acknowledge his deficiency, who fancies he is quite ready with a single passage of Scripture to put an extinguisher on the whole of this controversy. But stop, if you please, not quite so fast with your single passages. Just remember, and that once for all, that, even in the Scriptures, as well as elsewhere, *circumstances alter cases.* You have one

example in the 4th and 5th verses of the 26th chapter of Proverbs—*Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou be like unto him. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.* On these words you have the following commentary :—*Answer not a fool,* &c.—*Answer a fool,* &c. These contrary directions are easily reconciled, by considering the difference of persons, times, places, and other circumstances, and of the manner of answering. And such seemingly contradictory precepts are not only used by, but are esteemed elegant in other authors. *Answer him not,* when he is incorrigible, or when he is inflamed with wine, or with passion, &c., or when it is not necessary, nor likely to do him good. *Answer him,* when he is capable of receiving good by it, or when it is necessary for the glory of God, for the discharge of a man's duty, or for the good of others. *Answer not &c., according to his folly*—so as to imitate his folly, in such passionate, or reproachful, or foolish speeches as he uses to thee : *lest thou be like unto him.* Shew thyself to be as great a fool as he is. *Answer a fool according to his folly*—so as his folly needs and requires, convincing him strongly, reproving him sharply, and exposing him to just shame, *Lest he be wise in his own conceit*—lest thy silence make him arrogant and presuptuous, as if his words were unanswerable.

While a change of governments, in the Connexions of Methodism, is our express object, you are not left to uncertain conjectures, what you are to have in exchange for that which is to be removed. It is now with you for your consideration, and judgment. If it should meet with your approbation, it will then be as a means to quicken your zeal, and strengthen your pious resolution to remove the old, to make way for the new. If you are satisfied that the new is in accordance with the Scriptures, then you may rest perfectly satisfied with the result, you may then calculate, and be assured of the blessing of God, peace, and prosperity. Prospectively, you delightfully dwell on spiritual prosperity; for you may always expect, and confidently claim the Spirit's influence to accompany the truth—it is the violation of the word, which violates the dispensation of the Spirit—the more we adhere to the word, the more shall we receive of the Spirit—the great agent in our salvation. It is then that the Lord will add multitudes of believers to the church, as he

has ever done. Bless the Lord! where the salvation of lost sinners is concerned, *addition* is a glorious work—"And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." But when we think of *multiplication* in the same all-important work, as we read in 31st verse, 9th chapter Acts of the Apostles, *Then had the churches rest throughout Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified: and, walking in the fear of the Lord*, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, *were multiplied.* Oh! had the church proved faithful, at that rate of bringing into the church, the whole world would long since have been brought into the fold of Christ—the church must have a terrible account to give to the Blessed Redeemer, when he becomes their Judge. Some persons may attempt to excuse themselves by saying, that, "we do not live in apostolic times." But we have had the lapse of 1800 years to improve on their labours and example, and if the church is not better now than then, it ought to be! But we need not to go back to the infant state of the church for example and encouragement; we have only to look in our own day, at what has been accomplished through the instrumentality of Methodism—the past good must be acknowledged, notwithstanding one hundred thousand of the Wesleyan members have been recently lost to that Connexion. But for your encouragement, we would remind you of one remarkable circumstance, already mentioned in the course of the present work, that, of the man of God, James Caughey who had been the happy, the honoured, and the successful, instrument of the salvation of twenty-six thousand precious souls within six years; notwithstanding his extraordinary success, he was excluded from the Wesleyan chapels by John Wesley's Conference: had Wesley's successors been such holy men, and such successful instruments, can you calculate how short a period would elapse before the world "would be turned to Methodist." Then, what Methodist would *not* say "to *Methodism as it should be*, let *it* be most speedily turned"—while every holy man and woman is praying daily for its speedy conversion, and is ever ready to exclaim, "would to God that there was not an unsaved sinner on the earth." But here is the *chilling, deadening* difference of having this religion in the head and the tongue, and not in the heart! But we would *not* be hard on our poor dear brethren, knowing that you have been under disadvantages for many long years past: such is the atmos-

phere and influence of the Wesleyan Conference, that as soon as the preachers enter it they begin to lose their religion; hence, "now you are one of us, you are among the privileged class, no more going to class meeting for you, you are the Rev. Mr. So-and-so." But, your real work now, your bounden duty now, is to tell those reverend gentlemen that they must give place to better men—such men as James Caughey, and to such a system as will defend such holy and useful men as James Caughey—not in so many words, but by *buttoning up your pockets* against them and their corrupt, anti-christian, doomed system—yes for ever! If anything will stimulate you to set about the work of removing the rubbish this will, for the best builders up are the best breakers down; and the best planters are the best pluckers up.

Is it the present object, the *overturning* of all the *anti-christian* systems in Methodism, and are we urged on to the accomplishment of this work? But, then, you are informed what you are to have instead, in the room and place of the systems to be rejected; you have now laid before you "Methodism as it should be," embodied for your consideration and decision.

Should you determine in favour of the latter, then you will see that it is essential to remove the former, necessary to its constitution; and here you will not only have additional motive to incite you to action, but you will have positive real weapons for an effective combat. "For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." Hence, the weapons we use in this war must be spiritual, "not by might, or by power, but by my Spirit, saith the LORD of Hosts. What *art* thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel *thou shalt become* a plain: and he shall bring forth the head stone *thereof with* shoutings, *crying*, grace, grace unto it. In the work of God, the day of small things is not to be despised. God often choses weak instruments to bring about mighty things; and though the beginning be small, he can make the latter end greatly to increase. His wise and watchful providence is always attentive to the concerns of his church, and is continually superintending and ordering all events for its benefit. Therefore, do not be carried away with appearances; do not be satisfied with *show* and *parade*. "For the weapons of our warfare *are* not

carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds: casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; and having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled." The terms in these verses are *military*. Allusion is made to a *strongly-fortified city*, where the enemy had made his *last stand; entrenching* himself about the *walls; strengthening* all his *redoubts* and *ramparts*, raising *castles*, towers, and *various engines* of defence and offence upon the walls; and neglecting nothing that might tend to render his *stronghold* impregnable. The army of God comes against the place and attacks it; the *strongholds*, all the *fortified places*, are carried. The *imaginations, engines*, and whatever the *imagination* or *skill* of man could raise, are speedily taken and destroyed. Every *high thing, all* the *castles* and *towers* are *sapped, thrown down*, and *demolished;* the *walls* are *battered* into *breaches;* and the besieging army, carrying everything at the point of the sword, enter the city, storm and take the citadel. Everywhere defeated, the conquered submit, and are brought *into captivity, are led away captives;* and thus the whole government is destroyed.

It is easy to apply these things, as far as may be consistent with the design of the present work. The general *sense* we have given in what has been advanced and embodied. Therefore, "from heaven's love, we cannot hope too largely, if what is hoped for, we labour to secure," through this mighty armour of God, and when you have, in the fullest manner, discountenanced those official despots, and separated yourselves from their communion; when the sound part of you have given proof of your obedience, and thereby have distinguished yourselves from the others, that the innocent may not be punished with the guilty, always remembering that the sword of the Spirit, is the word of God, and that it is prayer that moves the hand that moves the world. What has not not prayer done! Prayer has divided seas, rolled up flowing rivers, made flinty rocks gush into fountains, quenched flames of fire, muzzled lions, disarmed vipers and poisons, marshalled the stars against the wicked, arrested the sun in his great race, scripturally speaking, burst open iron gates, recalled souls from eternity, conquered the strongest devils. Prayer has bridled and chained the raging passions of man, and routed

and destroyed vast armies of proud, daring, blustering despots.

We see not how you can go through the glorious enterprise, in opposing that execrable despotism, which is the scandal of religion, and of humanity. Unless God has raised up a people for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils! But, "If God be for you, who can be against you?" Are all of them together stronger than God? Let us go on, in the name of God, and in the power of his might, till even Wesleyan despotism, one of the vilest that ever saw the sun, shall vanish away before it. The united official despots, stationed and local, have no *prayer*, except that like unto the young man: "Lord, thy will be done, but let me have her." Such are not the disciples of him who hath said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." They have no *scripture*, consecutively understood; no *reason*; no *argument*. In vain are its "sacred deposits" and its "declaration of principles" exhibited. Like unto POPERY, which could never, by any power of self-reviviscence, restore itself after its defeat by the Reformation. In vain were its *bells* rung, its *candles* lighted; in vain did its *fires blaze*; and in vain were innumerable human victims immolated on *its* altars! The light of God penetrated its hidden works of darkness, and dragged its *three-headed* Cerberus into open day; the monster sickened, vomited his *henbane*, and fled for refuge to his native *shades*. Perhaps we had never before allowed ourselves to reflect upon the errors in Methodism in its true light. But however accumulated and formidable, this must be our everlasting consolation, He who is for the plain, glorious, and saving truth, is more than all who are for the mystifying, inglorious, and ruinous errors.

We have intimated that the worst features in Methodists' despotism is that in connexion with the Reformers themselves, in comparison with THE SOCIETY OF JESUS, a famous religious order in the Romish church. This society had rendered themselves so obnoxious by their arts and intrigues that they had been suppressed in all the kingdoms of Europe, and totally suppressed and abolished by the pope in 1773.

We would give honour to whom honour was due. But it was no advantage to walk in the shadow of great expectations.

The Methodist people, with more generosity than justice, had dubbed the Reformers as a most wonderful set of men for imitation, if not in all things, yet in great principles. How they came to that honour was more than we could say. At all events, if they ever came near to merit that reputation, it was owing to inspirations the result of circumstances, which exist no more. Under the magic influence of those circumstances, the time may have been when the idea of having to address vast assemblies may have acted upon their soul as the steel acts upon the flint, calling up by its electric power the spark which lay hidden within the cold stone. To the cheering influence of such demonstrations they did open their hearts—but only thus far. Then it was that the voice of vast assemblies as those acted upon their souls as steel acts upon flint. They became the mirror of their sympathies, and they, well pleased with the reflected light, were generous enough to think that it was the mirror that made the light, whereas, in fact, it came from themselves, and they were the glass which reflected back their own generosity. Then it was that the view of such vast assemblies, cheering their disappointed heart, was like the wand of the conjuror, that called up a spirit to supply their own deficiencies. They became inspired, and they made the unexpected discovery that they could speak common sense some how. But those times are gone by. The opportunity has been, and had passed. Our hopes, as far as resting not on the feelings but on the active policy of reformers, had died away. The animating dew had been dried up by the scorching blast of official-serving expediency. It was in complaint that we mention all this: Methodism was not free to do as it had done—it was not the master of its own destinies. All we could wish was,—and most fervently did we wish it,—that Methodist reform should never have occasion to rue the policy it had thought fit to follow in the emergency which had been, and which was not likely to return with equal prospects.

We especially confess that this poor heart of our's, oppressed with the long grief of a disciple's sorrow, was filled with one love—the love of our dear Methodism. Yes, Methodism! "with all thy faults we love thee still." We *certainly do not* despair of the regeneration of Methodism. It had *weathered* storms, if not more cruel, more terrible *for their strength*, and still Methodism lived; and it would *weather the storm*

always, we trust. Sure as we are of our own existence are we of the church future of Methodism. True, after long suffering, we have despaired to see officials cast their weight into the balance of Methodism as it should be. With this the illusion vanished that warmed our soul when formerly we acted in the cause of reform, but that inspiration is dried up, and now we appear to perform a plain honest labourer's work, and as such and nothing more we hope to be accepted. Methodist reform was likely to continue in good health, provided it committed not the sin of wrapping itself too fondly in its security, but like the sailor, who never neglected to take heed of the smallest speck on the distant horizon, least a tempest be couched in it, did not allow its sworn enemy, despotism, to combine official and non-officials arms into a collision, the tempest of which might eventually prove too powerful to weather, even for the real reform proud barque. The thunderbolts of the officials might be very harmless now-a-day in themselves, if not combined with the dupes of official despotism, combined with those they might prove thunderbolts in earnest. Methodists should remember that one church subjugated to this combination was the strength of one church acquired for the onward assault. We mention these facts to exemplify the statement that it was not about which the officials cared or ever did care, they had nothing to do with reform—in fact, if the object of the officials had been to secure religious freedom and liberty of conscience we should not have raised our voice against it. We demand religious freedom and liberty of conscience as a sacred human right, and we are thankful for the lot that has fallen to our share. We consider the religions of faith, the boundaries of which began where the limits of human reason ceased—we consider those mystic regions reserved by the Eternal Legislator for the property of man's own conscience. Interference with this was the worst of tyranny, "Do unto others as thou desirest others to do unto thee." To this law we bow in humble obedience. We would not hold communion with any man who was not willing to grant to his neighbour, whatever his creed, the same freedom to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience, which he claimed for himself. But religion is one thing, and official craft, with its ambition, another. No, the agreement concluded between the stationed and local official on the amalgamation, had absolutely nothing

to do with reform, if it had with religion itself. Its object was to make the structure of the church subordinate to official supremacy; to make religion itself a tool for the unremitting aspiration of officialism towards general dominion. The officials were organised instruments of despotic ambition. They were placed without the pale of the church, owning a realm of their own: their administration, their regulation—thank God, with one exception, their *revenues*—all withdrawn from the control and inspection of the church. All these means of power were held by the officials, who moved them as the steam engine moved machinery. Such, and nothing else, was the amalgamation of the Reform officials with the Association officials. Now, all this was certainly not reform. To name the sacred name of religion in connection with such a compound of craft was profanation if not blasphemy. In fact, it was a daring step to revive the official supremacy of the doomed Wesleyan Conference—more dangerous in its possible results, than the most daring aggressions which Wesley had ever achieved. Yes, truth standing with us higher than party, and justice higher than self-complacency, we proclaim aloud that we perceive no redeeming trait in the official amalgamation; which, like Boniface VIII, to use the well-known words, stole into the chair of St. Peter as a fox, who reigned as a lion, and who died like a dog. Therefore, their daring and crafty insolence are alike powerless to brave the resistance of a faithful people. Such people at all times had known to distinguish between religion and official craft; and by being zealously attached to the first, had determinedly opposed the other. It is a maxim worth attention, that mere official interference was a wind that blew nobody good. Therefore, every attempt at encroachments on our rights on the part of the officials, shall find, we trust, the Methodists united as one man united to oppose it. The officials in succession endeavoured to uphold such a monstrous claim over Methodism; but the struggle was a long one, and, we trust, will end in the perfect triumph of the people, which, by their indomitable perseverance, compel the official to resign his monstrous claims. The Methodist people, thus supported by their spiritual Chief, not only will not wince before the thunderbolts of the united officials, but thunder back again; the official excommunicate the people, and the people properly assembled excommunicate the official. This may be done in the very

darkest age of ignorance and superstition, and in later years, though the council of the amalgamation had enabled official church to hurl its anathemas against the people, and work the organised spiritual despotism of the officials, the thoughtful council of the people had never recognised them. We might be allowed to consider this a people's glory of which every Methodist had reason to be proud. We might stand upon incontrovertible history, and feel perfectly justified in asserting for Methodism its claims to the credit of Christendom —so far as the people are concerned, for there is no people— not one throughout the world which had rendered greater service to it. What, we ask, would have become of the world if Methodism had yielded to the awful current of the state church, or if it had remained within the pale of that church of which the successors of Wesley were the popes, or if it had not been among the first to open its heart to the light of real reformation, at least in those latter times, to proclaim religious freedom and liberty of conscience for all? Mighty indeed, and manifold indeed, were the services which Methodism had rendered to the Christian world. But, what was the key to this official mystery, so strange that it would be bordering on the ludicrous were it not so tragical in its results? We will give our key to the mystery. One thing in mere officials there was that never changed, another thing there was always on the change. The one thing never changing was the everlasting aspirations to spiritual despotism; the ever changing was official tactics and strategy. Time was, and is, when the local officials rivalled with stationed officials for supremacy, or at least equality, when they found it advantageous to throw themselves for support on the people. In times of agitation it constituted a part of the design of the local officials to attack stationed officials, and to rise in power in spite of them. But times change. It would require a long space to relate the progress of the change. The spirit of liberty, the spirit of God moved over the face of the waters, and infused the eternal aspirations of freedom into the heart of the people. Their realisation is the goal towards which the race of churches is bent: many may stumble, and many may fall. Though misfortune and distress may mow down the ranks of the racers, and others will fall off, the more will rush on to struggle through trial, and numbers of the discomfited on towards the goal of liberty; and that liberty is one

and indivisible like God himself. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are all one. Again, civil, social, and religious liberty are all one liberty. Man will be free. The spirit of freedom stands in the way of spiritual and temporal despotism, that spirit must be crushed to make either of them safe, and to crush it they think no means more permanently sure than to permit the officials of the church to rule over the people. Therefore, despotism changes its tactics to suit emergency. Stationed officials and local officials, occasional rivals, are to-day confederates against what they consider their common adversary, liberty. That was the key to the mystery. It was a fact, and not a mere speculation, that at the meeting of the official deputation, in 1855, a secret treaty was stipulated between the stationed officials and the local officials. Let the Methodist people consider what was the basis and what the manner in which the amalgamation with officials had been brought about, and they must come to the conclusion that the true key to the situation was the reunion of the despot's principles into a new holy alliance for an exterminatory campaign against the principles of liberty. The Methodist people themselves were strangers to the mysteries, but the mysteries to which they were strangers might yet prove a source of danger and trial to the people. Let the Methodist people pray that the amalgamation should not triumph over Methodist reform.

It was delightful and consoling to think that our onward course was towards the perfection of the human race. For men of noble aspirations, indeed, it would be difficult to bear up against the error prevailing and the ambition bearing sway on the church if they were not cheered by the thought that every righteous exertion in the cause of humanity will ultimately result in advancing mankind in its onward course. Take this conviction away, and nothing would be left but despair. And now ponder on the amalgamation, and say, was it not sad to think that even this consolation they were hardly permitted to enjoy? The brief summary of the amalgamation which we have given was by no means an adequate description of this monstrous compact of official craft and ambition. Its articles were calculated to overthrow every barrier to official supremacy, and to bring the conscience, the opinions, the mind, and the actions of a great people under the arbitrary control of the wise officials. However, that the mere officials

should not cease to aspire to spiritual despotism, and by it to supreme polity, would as little astonish us as that the upas tree should poison the air, or the vulture should hover over its carrion. Nature was nature. Who could wash white the Ethiopian? But that in this nineteenth century official ambition should be allowed to earn such a triumph as it did by this amalgamation was even what we were not prepared to witness. Who but knows that in the beginning of the Christian church it was far, far otherwise? But was it left for the united officials, in a wholesale way, in the nineteenth century, to violate those sovereign rights? In a word, the whole of the institutions of the people in fact would be under the arbitrary control of the officials thus organised. We think, from what we have adduced, that we were fully justified in saying that the officials in encroaching on the liberties of the people were guilty of a violation of the professed conditions of their own church reform, and, in a reform point of view, might be considered heretics themselves. Some say all this was a reform concern—it was the freedom of self-government, but that was hypocrisy. We have seen that all this had little to do with reform, but it had much to do with office and ambitious advantages. We are of those who say the mere official should not interfere with religious affairs. We think that no society could bear two masters. A real Reformer formed his estimate of the worth of a man not by his creed, but by his consistency. Extremely susceptible of our own conscience freedom, we are extremely jealous that the freedom of our brother's conscience should be respected likewise. We say, "Let him make it out between himself and his God—you shall not interfere." But the religious freedom, together with the church independence of officials, were now crushed by the invasion of two official parties acting under the connivance of others. In order that you may see to what extent the local condition of the people of Methodism has been already violated by the united officials, and to see what further dangers were impending from the compact, it would be necessary for us to state in a very few words what was the constitution of the Methodist (reform) church in a dogmatic point of view. The Reform Methodist recognised no human authority, the Bible was their only authority. In the interpretation of it relative to doctrine, the reformers religiously followed the views held by Wesley himself. They

do so not on account of such religious dogma being professed by Wesley, but because he had laid down a principle that the Bible—and the Bible alone—was to be the source—the spark that the Eternal Himself had laid in the mind of man. In another point of view the Reform church was perfectly democratic, possessing the principles of self-government and free elections by universal suffrage. Such was, in a few words, the position of the Reform church, and the system of freedom and progress by which they were to be governed, under free competition and publicity, were objects of particular endearment to the Reformers. This was a noble example of the spirit of toleration and freedom which was to be deeply rooted in the Reform church. But, alas, this much-cherished self-administration of the Reform churches, the precious fruit of repeated revolutions and so many sufferings, was laid prostrate. It had to share in the common oppression of all our church rights. Now, if even a little discussion meeting was allowed to be held it was only upon a particular grant in every particular case,—witness the positive refusal of the public press for the private members, and, dreadful to relate, instruction in the history of reform was proscribed. Nothing is allowed to be taught that could make the people know that Reform was a free church. Could there be imagined anything more tyrannical than to proscribe from a church's knowledge a church's history! However, the light of knowledge was not easily extinguished—as long as there was a little oil to feed the glimmering lamp. And, certainly, we thought there was a little oil to feed the lamp. The Discussion Society of the private members, notwithstanding the shackles with which they were fettered, would prove conservatories of reason, truth, and knowledge, and bid the sun of freedom disperse spiritual and official slavery. But these were sad times. Expediency bore the sway, and even religion must yield where liberty was allowed to be crushed. This was the actual condition of the Methodist Reformers before the Amalgamation, solemn declarations and pacifications with the fundamental laws based upon them, having been torn to pieces and scattered to the winds. But that was not enough. The compact of 1855 suspended the rod of united official ambition over the Methodist Reformers, and consummated what official absolutism, centralisation, and bigotry had begun. Woe to the Reformer of Methodism who would dare

to open his heart to the light of reformation! It is now the officials' commentary on the Bible. This terrible blow told its own tale. The life, the doctrines, and the very death of our Saviour, were full of instructions and of Divine condemnation of official-craft. The Bible was again to be perverted in the Reform church, you might be sure. Why, by all that was sacred, that sounded like the revival of the Wesleyan inquisition! Reform worship, nay, the very existence of Reformation had always been considered by the officials and their satellites a contempt of their church, and institutions. What dreadful persecutions are looming in the future from this state of things. And last, not least, it is stipulated that the officials have the authority of the supreme law of the church. If that system was allowed to work for two generations, one of the results that must follow was, that the next generation must be thrown back by a century behind the general standard of the polity of the age. Many persons would prefer not to have the people instructed at all, rather than to have their mind and soul corrupted by that instruction.

Therefore, beware of the Jesuitical, equivocal, deceitful, official ramification Amalgamation, by *stopping the supplies!* which is the most natural, reasonable, spiritual, and imperative duty and interest of the Methodist Reform Church; at the same time, easy to be accomplished. It is only for you to *will it*, and it *is done!* What *can* Reformers have to do with despots, who are their most determined and bitterest enemies?

It was a remark by a wise man, that events were God's book; and if that were so, the events of Methodism should teach a great deal to all who bear the name, and it would be reprehensible to attempt or affect to treat them with anything like dignified neglect. We are aware that it is gone forth to the world that the Reformers, as a body, approve the Amalgamated system, and, of course, must approve the conduct of the official meetings, and this opinion has been corroborated by various articles which have appeared in that periodical which is accounted "the organ of the body," as well as by the extraordinary conduct of some of the officials, to which latter circumstance too much importance, we think, has already been attached by the public press. That the majority of the Reform officials are in favour of the system adopted, can scarcely be doubted, even by those who wish it otherwise; but to say that this is equally true of the Reform private

members is a bold and unwarrantable assertion. This, to us, appears the very climax of inconsistency. Persons, however, whether official or private members, who seriously entertain such sentiments, ought not merely to weep and lament at the mischief thus done by Reform Methodism, but they ought most promptly and vigorously to commence repairing the breach and violation which has been made, and which has been getting wider and wider for nearly a century.

The reform amalgamation is a *nullity*. The person who pays the slightest attention to, and who is at all interested in, the cause of Methodist Reform, cannot be indifferent to the present state of things. If we for a moment direct our attention to the present compact of official Reformers, we shall find it placed in a very unenviable position, a storm is gathering over it which threatens to blight the blossoms of its future usefulness, and disappoint the hopes of its warmest supporters. There is only one way of escaping the impending danger, and that is by the adoption of those principles which will identify the interests of the people with the officials. The only foundation upon which those interests can securely rest is on an equal administration. In the Church of Christ there ought to be no exclusive interest, the interest of one part ought not to be incompatible with another, *Nothing short of this equal distribution of legislative power will ever destroy that spirit of disaffection, that is spreading in every part of the connexion.* This is the grand desideratum to obtain. No effort is too great, no sacrifice too costly. This would bring about a state of things in which a spirit of anarchy and disaffection would give place to that of peace and confidence; this would convert the arm of despotism and cruelty into an instrument of equity and justice; this would raise to dignity and independence the thousands that are groaning under the weight of those chains, which have been rivetted by the very hands which should have been employed in promoting their liberties; in a word, an equal distribution of legislative power would lay a foundation, upon which the most noble and imposing structure might be erected, one that would secure the admiration of the churches and the world, because copied from that model which the Scriptures exhibit. If this were done, we have no doubt that the period would soon arrive, when all the bodies of Methodists would join, in amicable co-operation, in promoting the interest of one common cause, a cause which has

for its object the glory of God, the spread of the gospel, and the evangelization of the world.

The real Reformers have an important duty to perform. It is for them to act a manly and decided part in advancing the cause of religious liberty. It is for them to give a completion to that destiny that awaits them. Will they compromise the principles, the sacred principles of Scripture? Will they compromise the future welfare and interest of the people for the sake of a few unimportant and ridiculous concessions to officials? Our fears are aroused. Yet we hope that they will stop in time, until they obtain firm ground upon which to stand; if not, they may bury themselves in that mass of corruption which they would have removed could they have commanded all their strength. But we know our rights, and, knowing, dare maintain. To the law we refer, and will exact of those unrighteous men a constitutional procedure.

If the constitution is so sound and perfect as the Amalgamated officials would persuade us, why is there such a continual tendency to eruption? Why are tumours of the worst kind occasionally breaking forth throughout the body? That something is radically wrong, appears to us demonstrable, and nothing but a Scriptural and radical medicine, administered by the skilful and wise hand of our great church physician, will prove effectual. And now that the Methodist Reformers have got the wound again opened up before their own eyes and eyes of a wondering world, if they tamely submit to the lordly domination of their ghostly, would-be, rulers, they deserve to be official ridden.

There *is* one One, who sitteth in the heavens, and is duly observing these things, and however stoically the official lords may listen to the people's complaints, and cooly *repeat* to them, "If you are not pleased with us, quietly leave us," yet he "by whom kings reign" will not wink at such gross and unscriptural apathy. Such lukewarm characters shall be treated like the Laodiceans, whom "he will spue out of his mouth." The Lord will rise on your behalf, O Methodist, and will call these stewards to give an account of their stewardship, and then it will be found "that it had been better that a millstone had been hanged about their necks, and they cast into the depths of the sea, than that they had unnecessarily and unscripturally offended one of Christ's little ones."

The light which in modern times had been cast on ecclesias-

tical questions, would be fatal to the recurrence of so monstrous an anomaly. The love of power began to operate in the the minds of the Reform officials. A spirit of inquiry was diffused among the people; and, after a severe and protracted struggle, arrangements were come to which, *apparently*, but only in appearance, secured tranquility. But we should continue to labour till everything inconsistent with the Book be removed from that church, which ought to have been the great pillar of the truth and support of vital godliness in the land—in the world. But were there an almighty regenerating power to annihilate matter, and then to produce a noble reality in its place, we would rejoice that the evil was passed: that a new form of Methodism, based upon Divine truth, sought the respect and even the love of mankind. It had been the object of the would-be masters of Reform Methodism to place the supreme power in the hands of one class, the officials, (and that a mere fraction of the whole,) and at the same time to diminish popular rights, until the people were debarred from authority and influence in managing the affairs of the Connexion. What were the officials? a body grasping the legislative, judicial, and executive power in their own hands. They met in secret conclave, week after week, and never allowed any one, who was not of their own order, to appear upon the floor of the official assembly. They, in effect, made every law, and, when they pleased, they could set aside any law. Did Wesley, the Pope of Methodism, or Wesley's Conference ever exceed this in reality? It was opposed to that spirit of self-reliance and independence which were indispensable to moral worth and independence. Who, with a particle of common sense, cares anything more for a Leader's meeting than for a preacher's meeting; and yet this distinction is the factotum of the official Reformers object in every Methodist church; and, we must say, that they are perfectly right if we can arrive at the conclusion that one hundred despots is better than a single one. Despotic Reformers—why we look on them with more withering contempt than on the tyrants of Rome, or even those of Wesleyanism itself in its most aggravated form and description. If this system dreaded one thing more than another, it was freedom of speech and of the press. We do not think that Russia herself groaned more under the idea that there were a few spots in the world where questions bearing on the religious and social well-being of man could be freely

discussed, than did the Amalgamated official Reformers. It made no provision for the free expression of popular opinion. They talked of the reform of "the people called Methodists," but it was indeed all a delusion. There had been no reform for the people in the whole history of Methodism. The officials would dread such a reform as much as the Pope of Rome would dread a reform of the people of Italy. It has been observed by the poet, that "vice is a monster of such hideous mien, that to be hated needs but to be seen." We believe that remark is strictly applicable to the Amalgamated Methodism. The question then arose,—if that were true, how came it to pass that official Methodism was not universally hated? The answer is, for the same reason that vice is not universally hated. Vice is not universally hated. Vice is not loved because of what it really is, but because of what it appeared to be. It deceived men, and they were betrayed into an attachment to it. The men who valued and supported the Reform Amalgamation, do not understand what such a reformation really is. They regarded its exterior, and failed to detect the anti-scriptural principle which the Reformers held and exercised. Some persons *could not* see the evil of such Reform Methodism, and others *would not*. In the case of the former the prejudice is so great that it blinded the eyes, and with the latter, there is nothing less than a wilful and determined closing of the eyes against the light. It was the duty of *real* Reformers, on the one hand, to expose the evil of the system, and on the other hand to show a remedy. It should be their high aim to institute a system which should combine all the good in the old ones without any of their evils. And were Reform Methodists thoroughly alive to their own privileges they would rise as one man, and cast off the huge incumbrance of Amalgamation Methodists, and render it at once and for ever, a thing of the past. Popery, it should be remembered, did not belong exclusively to Rome, or to Wesley's Methodism. It was not an indigeneous plant, it belonged to humanity. It was an unsanctified principle of human nature, developed in an ecclesiastical form. The principle existed in the breast of every unsanctified official in the church, and unless restrained by Divine grace, it inevitably developed itself in the shape of lordly-office, but it puts forth its monstrous claims with remarkable craft and subtlety. The Amalgamation Reformers had insidiously sapped the

very foundations of truth and equity. On the platform they professed to be guided by the Word of God. Were this the rule they would be worthy of reform. But we thought an essential element of reform to be its adoption of the Bible, *and the Bible alone*, as its rule of faith and practice. Rome, however, said "The Bible, and the councils of the Pope"; Wesleyan Methodists, "The Bible, and the councils of John Wesley." And what say all Reform Methodism? "The Bible, and the *Leaders' Meeting*." We have already told you, "No such meeting that we read of in the Bible, nor of a single leader in the New Testament, except the blind *leader* of the blind." "Oh! but we mean representatively." We know well *their* meanings, they have a *double* meaning in their declaration of principles—"the church, *or* representatively, to govern." We say, in that particle *or* may be found a meaning for a world of mischief and treachery; it is positively an official plot whereby they may be empowered to act as so many petty Popes over the Church of Christ. We would have the public on its guard not only against open and avowed Popery, but against that which was more disguised and insidious in its character. The danger came from the latter quarter. We believe every Methodist Reformer ought to have his whole soul imbued with a deep conviction of the vast importance of his principles. If they were unfaithful to their conviction of truth and duty, God would assuredly raise up worthier and truer labourers to prosecute the enterprise. We would remind our friends that if they failed to to do their duty they would lose their reward. There were great principles involved in the struggle, of which it behoved us never to lose sight. We believe that the Amalgamation Reform, as well as the Wesleyan Conference, was, in its constitution and acts directly opposed to the teaching of the New Testament Scriptures, that the prerogatives claimed by the reform officials were an invasion of the prerogatives of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of the rights of his people. The Wesleyan Conference talked of a sacred deposit committed to it by John Wesley. That fiction, however, was exploded long since by the inquiry of thinking Reformers, as to the source whence John Wesley himself obtained it. The reform officials talked a great deal about the declaration of reform principles, but without dwelling on that document at large, we might just observe that there were two leading points

involved in the Scriptural principles—first, the headship of Christ's Church, and second, the brotherhood of Christians. Those were the two pillars on which the reform arch *should* have rested. The headship of Christ—we should regard Him not simply as the priest and prophet of his people, but our king. God had set Him upon His holy hill of Zion. He was the great lawgiver, and in the New Testament all might be found, that was necessary for a man to know both as to faith and practice. Now, we do not mean to say that the amalgamation reform refused to recognise the authority of the book, or submit to its teachings. Bnt we do maintain, that they claimed for their declaration of principles an authority equal to the laws of the Lord Jesus Christ. True, the Reformers *seem* to maintain that the Bible was the statute-book of a Christian Church, and that no man should be expelled from a Christian Church, but for a violation of the law of the Great Master. As to the other principles for which they *seem* to contend—the perfect equality of Christians—why, it was familiar to every reader of the law of the New Testament, "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." That noble sentiment was at variance with class distinctions in the Church of Christ. These were common in Methodism, including the Amalgamated Reformers, but only the Reformers were unable to recognise the invidious distinction between clergy and laity. In Wesleyan Methodism the term indicated the possession of rights, privileges, and authority, on the part of one class which were unenjoyed by another. But yet they do hold a distinction in their own declaration of principles; by those principles the church which is to govern, to admit or expel its members, may be composed solely of official members: the Leaders' meeting in the separate churches have that authority. And of course by them regarded as a "sacred deposit,"—yes, another deposit to be exploded after due exposure. The officials, in virtue of their office, in power and authority, in the name of a "leaders' meeting," in every Methodists' Church doing its every-day work, and then comes the consummation of popery in its worst, its most disgusting form, after the officials have done their work of despotism with closed doors in their own way, come they forth to insult the church by assembling its private members together, for what purpose, think you? to consult them—about what? why, the very business which they had

transacted in secret, which they had decided on, and which had been executed by themselves before the church had been gathered together, for no other earthly purpose but to keep up the farce of liberality, of brotherly equality, in accordance with—"One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." These overwhelming assertions have been already proved—can and shall be exposed—consummate hypocrisy added to despotism, insult added to cruel tyranny. Why, we have said that John Wesley, one of the greatest despots as he was, was not a hypocrite, he would cut off your Methodistical head for a word speaking, and make his boast of it, hence his, "I desire to do all things naked and above board," and his despotic successors, the Conference, who had the power of expulsion for anything, even to the tying the shoe the wrong way, he and they made no profession of reform, they only acted in character. In these respects Wesley and his Conference, who merit our unlimited contempt, will bear but little comparison with the unparalleled monstrosity of the Amalgamated cruel deceivers of a trusting church.—From such a reformation, good God, deliver Methodism!!!

Blame not heaven for your tyrants, but blame yourselves! let us ever remember that the Lord helps those who help themselves. Therefore, much, very much, depends upon ourselves—it is "man maker of immortal fates," and "truth a trust." Truth was given to us by Jesus Christ as a solemn trust, to be handed down by us unimpaired to posterity. Truth is to be defended. Its adherents had to prove that the principles they had espoused were scriptural in their character: that the New Testament really and truly taught the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ in His church; and that no man should be put out of the church but by the united voice of its members. We rejoice in the prospect which unfolds itself of, however distant, ultimate triumph. We can conceive that we are rather too practised with a familiarity with the arts of the opposite party, to be hood-winked by any masked batteries that may be directed against our rights and liberties. As usual, in confuting others, the officials put into our mouth what will confute themselves. We quite agree with the official Reformers that, "all great principles are of slow growth in the minds of the masses of society." Therefore, we are, anxious for an inquisitive temper to be raised in their minds

in order that they may understand the object and character of professed Reformers, as well as the object and character of professed despotism. "Under ordinary circumstance, a man would be considered guilty of gross neglect, to say the least, if he did not avail himself of every means to be set right with those with whom he differed;" so say the official Reformers of the Wesleyan Conference officials: so say we of the Reform officials: and so say we of the people themselves, as constitutions should not be forced upon people that were unfit for them, from a clear, deep, and painful necessity of a complete change.

And this is still not enough. What there has transpired of the Amalgamation transactions, the mysteries of which fill the darkest page of degradation in any records of history connected with Reform Methodism; and what there is transpiring from the fumes of secret diplomacy, affords a just ground for apprehension that in one way or another the prospects of reform are about to be immolated to official's taste and aim at strength. "We have already the people in our grasp, with your consent Reformers, and we are resolved to keep them," say the Association. "We invite you to devise some forms to save appearances for our keeping them. Ours is a losing game; a down the hill course, we cannot make the two ends meet. It is your own interest to devise some such forms to shield us with your reputation, because we tell you we will keep what we hold, with or without your consent; and if you dare contradict us, well, then be prepared to see us side by side with your opponents." Such is the language of facts the Association holds to Reformers. While, if allowed a full insight into the mysteries, we would hear her at the same time sending such a message as this to Reformers:—"We have an intense delight in informing you, our most beloved brethren, that we are perfectly successful in over-awing and humbugging our trembling people. And you know, our beloved brethren, that we have too much to thank Reformers for in the past notice, and that our future is too dependent on your generosity, to leave you any doubt that we can have no objection—decayed as we are, alas, not from age—to resting on the prop of mighty reform, and consequently obedient to her wise dictates."

History will show it—if the people, taking advice from desperation, do not prevent it—that such is the brewing of

secret diplomacy. The moral of the strain is, when secret diplomacy is bargaining away churches, and the Methodist people lets it be done, we, at least, will act our humble part by presenting impartially the case, which, thus presented, will show that no party on earth has a right either to sell us or to regulate our institutions.

In the meantime we would ask, is there no remedy against such usurpatory bargainings, fraught with an amount of mischief surpassing indignation? There is—*No Association Alliance*, for the present at least. Why not bring the reform to the test on the real merit of the case? instead of hunting the harlequin "system" over a ground full of loop-holes and escapes, whereon the charge is sure to be triumphantly met by such similar repartees as "We are just about to consolidate; we have great pleasure in announcing that the obstacles appear to be removing, and so on." All this will certainly neither defeat despotism nor save reform. Why not bring them to the test? that the reformers may at least know what they have to expect from such Amalgamation. It is a great thing to save a Connexion of churches from wreck. And if the Connexion be doomed to wreck, it is a great thing to be able to say, "We have done our duty, we can stand erect amongst the ruins, though with our heart bleeding, but with our conscience clear."

We repeat, relative to this Amalgamation, as a whole, we really apprehend we feel rather inclined to look at it as at a very instructive example for non-imitation. We are strangely mistaken or else no Methodist church on earth in all futurity will cut a pattern after this Amalgamation government of Methodist reform, provided the unwarrantable authority of reform protocols does not silence their understanding and fetter their free will. We may have thought them in earnest, and meant something. Their subsequent conduct has cruelly undeceived us. They were not serious, they meant nothing. If there is a people in the world, where official authority perfectly paralyses scrutiny, and supplies the defect of argument, the Methodist, the unthinking portion of them, are the people. But with those whom the worth of mere official authority—what are they to-day?—men whom they never more can trust, and never will.

There is a danger for Methodism in this unscrupulous

inconsistency of her party leaders. The power alternates between stationed and local officials. And unless a radical change comes over the system, is it possible that the people ever should trust officials ? And yet it is sure to come when officials shall want the confidence of the people ; officials having trifled with the highest interest of the people, forfeited it, and forfeited remains, the trust, the faith, and the confidence. The *prestige* of official morality once lost, confidence is not easily restored. It will be rueful and is dangerous.

This movement of the " Discussion Society" will partake largely of a penal nature against our great delinquents, and, therefore, it is particularly valuable in our eyes, as likely to lead to results that never would be attainable by any other means. It will menace not simply this or that order, but the class from which all officials have hitherto been exclusively formed, with the deprivation of power if there be speedily forthcoming ample proofs of a capacity to use it less foolishly and selfishly than has been the case from time almost immemorial. The cant of individual responsibility is now to be followed by real chastisements of the culprits belonging to office, and in the terror this must occasion we have some assurance for exertion to escape the penalty. The simple fact of such a meeting as that of a Discussion Society, composed of the talent of the church, and attended by so unmistakable a demonstration of stern feeling, declaring that the service of the church must and shall be recruited from other ranks than those who have monopolised office, is, in itself, the certain precursor of wide and sweeping change. It is a thoroughly revolutionary agitation—the revolution that pulls down endangering feebleness to set up assuring strength. It is a church agitation, and is distinguished from all others, in our times, in being unimpaired by the excesses of impracticable zealots.

The officials may have still some feelings left regarding the people, but they are a strange medley of right and wrong. They would, without hesitation, sacrifice their right and happiness, but not their esteem. Yet, in spite of themselves, a deep feeling of anxiety may be visible sometimes on their countenance, a few more throws, were it their favor, would give them all they desired. The people would be in their power, and would have fallen into the snare they had been so

artfully planning for a length of time. No wonder it was difficult entirely to conceal their eagerness.

In this movement we may recognise something aggressive, earnest, and bravely honest—something of that earnestness which once distinguished Reformers, and which has latterly been falling into quite an obsolete virtue. Our forefathers used to pull down abuses with both hands, but we have been too much in the fashion of touching them gently with the little finger. They did not shrink at a few consequences to certain orders when vast interests were at stake, and they thus made the name of a Reform revered, and the reformed a terror to evil doers. The Private Members' Discussion Association have taken up a bold position, indicating, at the outset, something like a criminal charge against our great delinquents. Their aim is to pull down feebleness and to set up strength. There may be very able men among the officials, but there are noodles also, and it is to hinder for ever promotion of the incompetent, to destroy power of *caste* and domination of the officials, and that absurd attempt at class legislation which we have long seen, that the Discussion Society is organised. Who doubts now that a far greater calamity might befall Methodism than the loss of its official system, if by its loss we gained efficiency, honour, and honesty in every department of the church. A portion of the people is ripe for the movement in favor of the Discussion Society which is now being inaugurated. The defects of our every governing system have been more than suspected for a considerable time, and they must be laid bare and palpable to the dullest comprehension. And when the source of the evils has to some extent been divulged, there is a hope that the same unanimity will be displayed in an effort for reform. Here is certainly a call for revolution, but it is a revolution which will amend disorder and secure efficiency, and not one which will produce the effects generally associated with movements so characterised. We rejoice to see the movement. It will encourage others who have strong hands and pure hearts to take up the cause and carry the just complaints of the outraged and insulted people to their proper conclusion—a solemn impeachment of the official system—which must be changed.

Most earnestly do we trust that the movement thus initiated will find zealous adherents and active supporters in every Methodists' church throughout these lands. Affairs have now

reached a point at which such agitations is imperative—a time when to be careless is to be criminal, and when continued acquiescence with a corrupt system, which is eating into the very vitals of our common church, paralysing all its powers, and perverting all its energies, may involve the ruin of everything which has made Methodism prosperous and respected among different nations of the earth. Never, in the history of Methodism, was there greater cause for apprehension—never a more stringent necessity for exertion. To us it appears that any reformatory movement intended to be successful, must be directed in the first instance to the purification and enlargement of our system, and to that alone. While the officials retain their present constitution, we can expect nothing but a continuance of calamity and of present disgrace. This, we doubt not, will be seen by the new party of active Reformers. This movement is one of which they may well be proud, and which, if they follow it up with the spirit with which it has begun, will entitle them to the lasting gratitude of the Methodist people. It is a work worthy of them. The counsels and proceedings of the officials are patent to them more than to any other portion of the community, and their verdict will have greater weight with the people at large. Let their advocacy be equal to their cause, and let them throw into the work the energy it deserves, and they will command the hearty response and enthusiastic support of all honest men who ardently love the prosperity of Methodism.

The stationed officials, by their despotism, have ruined their usefulness to the people; to say the least of it and the best of it they are "become *as* sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." The local officials, by pursuing a similar policy, will be sure to injure their usefulness with the people more closely connected with them than by public preaching or a quarterly visitation. Can the people in the class meeting receive the testimony and benefit by the instructions of leaders who are their practical lords and masters, who may so far forget themselves as to give a severe lecturing against their reform propensities. This is not a mere supposition, the writer has been thus lectured in class before his brethren. It must be in the power of the church to prevent such misconduct—the people could meet together to mutual comfort and edification without such a leader. Such officials are bringing disgrace upon themselves—the people are free. And in a voluntary church, if the people are not

free from despotism in all their institutions, it must and shall be their own fault—the very appearance of it must not be suffered to exist—we have law in our own hands, and if the perfect law of liberty shall make us free, we shall be free indeed!

We find ourselves sometimes at a loss to describe petty officials; but though apparently extravagant, yet not exceeding the truth, we are disposed to glance at their minimum minds through a microscope; and, lo and behold, perceive that a hundred such little minds could be put into a nut shell, or ten thousand of them danced upon the point of a needle—yea, "less than nothing and vanity;" "less than the least," therefore, not to be known or seen at all—a mere fiction and an illusion—hence, "he that thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing, deceiveth himself;" and, therefore, such degrade themselves, not us. Being exposed, they are now "clothed with shame."

The officials have, exclusively, opened their hearts to each other, as two tributary streams flow on and blend together. Double villiany, setting the example of deceit we owe them—from whom we have received none—no mercy in this hour, when the sins of the past are about to fall on them heavily! They won the hearts of the people by frequently going amost them with a frank appearance of good-will, and expressions of interest in their pursuits. Who wanted their condescension!—who cared for their notice?—who reckoned ought of their office, their dignity, their heart-festering pride? There was as much pride in the hearts of them they injured—pride, too, of a better sort—the pride of an honest name, that had known no such stain until they came to blacken it with the foul shadows of dishonour. The partial education received by the people marred the official purposes, but they strove to effect them by alternately rousing and wounding their pride. Few are wise enough to learn by experience, and those who do learn, often learn too late. Official name or names will be no warrant to you for their sincerity—notwithstanding their bowing with elaborate politeness.

It is now some years since the reform movement commenced, and it the officials composing it had possèssed the requisite knowledge, and been animated with the right spirit, they would before this have come to some definite understanding of what they wanted to do, and how they were to do it. Such has not, however, been the case, and their

various meetings, although numerously attended by promiscuous audiences which applauded everything, cannot be regarded as entirely successful. It is one thing to win praise of a body of careless friends at such gatherings, and quite another thing to gain the confidence of a people at a time of connexional trial. Even those who applauded most vigorously on those occasions would find it difficult to say what they had learnt, what principles had been inculcated, or what practice enforced. Very little, indeed, could have been gathered from officials' somewhat egotistical harangues, and the only thing that we could discover of practical utility was, the exposure of some gross misconduct in the Conference business under the immaculate system of John Wesley and his well-connected successors. When read throughout the Connexion in sober thought, far away from the show of the big gatherings, what lessons would the speeches teach? Can any body tell from them what the reform is about, or, whether, indeed, it is about anything more important than the circulation of platitudes, or the establishment of a small business in the official order and line? Its members may be earnest in their craving after better connexional office-keeping, but they are too vague to have weight; and yet, what are they doing but asking the people to supply grumble in the abstract, a thing equally destitute of affinities with practical reform.

A people can only be rightly stirred by something which appeals to its moral sense. The sordid interests of the officials may find the means for the agitation; but it is the hatred of injustice, the common feeling of outrage at the spectacle of an official stealing the people's dearest rights, that must give to that movement a power which all the wealth and influence of officials and their "principal friends," could not purchase. Of the moral force which lies in the heart and conscientious assertion of great principles, we can see nothing in the procedings of the Wesleyan Reformers or in their speeches or writings. The whole thing is of the official order. It wants breadth, expansion, definition, object, purpose, and plan. We wish it success, and, therefore, point out its failings with an unsparing but a friendly hand.

We do not think that the struggle in which Methodism is engaged can possibly be brought to any definitive decision whatever, without the co-operation of the people. The officials

[illegible] all their strength and resources without coming to any other issue than something like those miserable small gamblings, the nastiness of which we denounced as soon as they were started, as a sham, a sin, and a delusion.

Well, we say, the officials may come to such shame and shore, and delusion as the amalgamation without connexion of the people: but it seems that question is Methodist reform which, if left unsettled, will engulph their future: they never can without the people's co-operation. The private members in some future time may do it without them, in spite of them, but they never can do it without the people—not with all the power of amalgamated officials—let their web be formed, but it *shall* be scattered.

As to the oppressed people, it is perhaps better for them not to be under any obligation to officials, the regard for whom might have fettered their resolutions and compromised the proper issue. At least, in a struggle that involves liberal opinions, what we would most dread is that the hopes of liberty would be betrayed, and all their promises broken; and the instant the officials of reform could obtain a peace that realised the objects for which officials go to agitate; they will abandon the helps they had lured into revolt, and restore to despotism the "right divine to govern wrong."

We are anxious for the people to be convinced that the position which they may, and should now occupy, the Private Members' Discussion Society, will be the watchword of freedom, and the forerunner of good government in Methodism.

The Private Members' Discussion Society was only a preliminary outburst of the feeling of indignation and disgust with which the Methodist people regarded the incapacity, indifference, and corruption of their rulers. The powerful array of means both for home and foreign operation, fitted out by the generosity, and sent forth with the proud satisfaction of the Methodist thousands, have proved, for many years, for some mysterious reason, all but harmless against the common enemies of God and man, whom we have been accustomed to look upon as the victims of a destructive power they could not be expected to withstand; and it is not surprising that the officials under whose auspices they were sent forth, and under whose directions they were placed should be called to account for the blunders and neglect which have brought upon those array of means failure and disaster. But

we question whether the indignation of the people is directed against the real delinquents. It is not merely under the *cold shade* of the stationed officials, properly so called, that the institutions of the Connexion languish and wither; but under the upas of the cliques composed of local officials,—a great number of arrogant and exclusive kind of oligarchs, who have managed by half a century of intrigue, combinations, and corruption, to constitute themselves the joint dispensers of all power and patronage in the Connexion; and look with as much jealousy and distrust upon other men, of their own rank in life, as upon any portion of the people whatever.

The discussion meeting of the private members, to set on foot a league for obtaining a radical change in all the departments of the governing service of the church, may be looked upon as the commencement of one of the most important popular movements on the road of church independence and fair play, since the days of the movements in apostolical times for freedom and purity. The officials of Methodism must at length look to it: by talent and virtue, and above all by justice to the other members of the church, they shall hold their own, perpetuate the respect in which the people wish to hold them. They shall not be allowed to hold the vantage ground of official corruption. This official corruption it is which is at the bottom of the system of church management complained of; it is this which enables them to keep it up to the detriment and disgrace of the Connexion, even in such times like the present. It is of much importance that the Connexion should in the first instance pronounce, with united voice, its opinion that the dangerous and disgraceful conduct complained of really does exist; and when that announcement is sent forth from all the churches, the means of eradicating the evil will next be discussed, and we have no doubt successfully. The present movement, by some parties, may be called a *flash in the pan;* but it is one which clears out the popular gun before we prime and load for action. Convinced, as we are, that the movement is a truly great and necessary one, and that it merits universal support, we nevertheless feel that it is not its present phase that all its importance will be seen; and that it is only in so far as, in going on, it will necessarily assume a more precise and practical shape, that it can be considered as fully meeting the wants of the times. For the sake of the honour and glory of Methodism, we hope that the voice, as

one man, which has already spoken out, will find an echo in the breast of every true Methodist from the river to the ends of the earth. We believe that in the present crisis it is the incumbent duty of every member of the church to make himself acquainted with the way in which the business of the church and reform is being conducted; and when he hears such men as the peaceful private members of the Methodist people uniting in one common denunciation against the disastrous system which has wasted the churches, and endangered its very existence, he needs no exhortation from us to read every word reported, and afterwards to co-operate with his brethren in forwarding the movement. The movement is constitutional in the true signification of the word. Neither is the movement against the order of the officials, on its merits, indeed, may depend the continued existence of that order. Efficiency in every department of the government of the church is the best guarantee for the safety of their rightful prerogatives. But the movement is really against that official monopoly of the present government, which may be described to have consisted of Lords to the exclusion of the Commons; and this exclusion the Commons will no longer bear, for in it may plainly be seen the fall of the Methodist people. We, however, frankly confess to a conviction that there must be a thorough reform in our system of government before we shall see official mismanagement finally banished from Methodism. Let us, however, take care that in blaming others we do not overlook our own misdeeds. The fault is not in our stars, but in ourselves, that we are the slaves of a few officials. Let the people only do their duty, and we shall ere long be enabled to put the right men in the right place. No man should be put in office who does not declare himself in favour of merging all official meetings, and all official authority, into church meetings, and church authority. This is the object which the promoters of the Private Members' Discussion Society have in view, and we hope soon to see so good an example followed from one end of the Methodist world to the other.

We are of those who must acknowledge that our ruling passion is, the love of Methodism as it should be. We want some master spirits in its cause. We venture to ask if the time has not arrived for earnest men to "lend a hand" to that

good work which, however assisted by others, must be done by the people themselves, if done at all.

Methodist brethren, may we be allowed, without any further apology, from what has been advanced, to urge you to form yourselves, at once and without delay, in a Private Members' Discussion Society, and to make a few brief observations on its formation and conduct or management, as having had some personal experience in a similar society.

In the first place, you should take one step—consult with a brother for a commencement. Do not wait for the prospect of a popular assembly. Meet together, if only by twos and threes to begin with. Invite the brethren cordially, and that of all the Connexions of Methodism, but no coaxing of any one. Give them to understand that it is for their own interest they are invited to join you; that it is a means to communicate important information. Therefore, the Discussion Society should not be held up too cheaply—invite ardently, but attempt not to cram. You will find it necessary for members to be admitted by ticket, when every one should pay his proportion of the necessary expense. To preserve order, and to further the business of the meeting, you may have to select a brother to preside. You may not find it necessary to commence and conclude the meeting by singing and prayer. On the subjects to be discussed your views and feelings may not always harmonise, but previous to your meeting together to promote the interest and prosperity of the church, it becomes our duty and privilege, as individuals, to "enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which is in secret shall reward thee openly." And unless that duty is performed, you may rely on it there will be no satisfactory issue of the Discussion Society. You will find in the Discussion Society, not only a variety of opinions, but a wide difference as to *taste* even among the private members themselves, and which should be treated accordingly. You should never allow any contention which is the best or the worst system of the different Connexions. Let all impartially be brought to the test, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, *it is* because *there is* no light in them." It will become you not to deal harshly with any private member, but at the same time you should

act firmly should any one so far forget himself as to persist in taking up the time in advocating Methodism as it is, such person may form a counter meeting, but must *not* be allowed to interrupt a reform meeting where there is no reasonable prospect of doing any good. You will find another class, even among Reformers, who will require some little sifting, persons fishing for office, and therefore are desirous to keep in favour with the present officials of the church. Be on your guard that their opinions go only for what they may be worth. Take them from whence they came. And as such persons might contrive to pack the meeting, you should never allow any *motion* to be put to the meeting. Any official member of the church should be considered eligible to attend the Private Members' Discussion Society, by subscribing to—"That all official authority, and all official meetings, shall merge into church meetings, and into church authority." Whatever regulations may, from time to time, be required, all should be recorded in the form of rules. As too much precious time has already been lost, the Discussion Society, in every church, under existing circumstances, should at least be held once a week. Some one church must make a commencement in a connexional revolution, prior to a connexional organisation like unto any great connexional affair. The question remains, have matters yet come to a pass so absolutely hopeless? Let the test which furnishes the answer to this question be *immediate earnest* ACTION. May the people at length stir on the subject which has gradually been growing to almost exclusive occupation of the Methodist public mind. Those meetings derive their greatest significance from the, essentially if not exclusively, character of those who promote it. It is the voice of the people. The sentiments expressed by them are fair, reasonable, and moderate—they are not chargeable with declamation or intemperance, or any traces of that impatient vanity which makes so many reformers. When every man has then a right to speak, why should there be any ill-temper and hard words? Judging by personal experience, we would say, that those meetings express the thoughts of nine out of every ten reasonable and enlightened Methodist. To be increasingly *reasonable* and *enlightened* we should, "*Read, mark, learn*, and *inwardly digest.*" Wherefore, beloved brethren, suffer the word of apostolic exhortation, ***Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wroth: For the***

wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. We should make it a rule to think before to speak; clear speaking arises from clear thinking. Should any officials of the church, at any time, charge you with being connected with the private members' discussion society, you may hear what they have to say, take it all in: coolly ask them if that is all they have to say, then wish them a good night. Should the officials press you with their observations, either verbally or in print, you will have, as individuals, one answer for them, "I *am* doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, while I leave it and come down unto you?" Should you at any time be summoned to a "leaders' meeting," of course, you will heed it as much as a summons from the moon—*even* when you are not engaged in your daily *exercise*, as you *should* now be for some considerable time—in order that you may be fully prepared for the conflict against the united official-craft, for the severe struggle against the church's bitterest and most determined enemies. As you value your own salvation, your work will be serious—as you value the salvation of your own families, so will your work be deeply serious—as you value the salvation of perishing sinners, of a lost world, so will you set no bounds to your work of faith, and labour of love, to come up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty—wicked men and devils, the sworn enemies of God and man. O! the overwhelming idea of the final loss of one immortal soul. None but the Father of *eternity*, duration without beginning or end, can fathom it. Let us ever remember that there are characters, "whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not" Can you work?—then work for God, His work is the *salvation* of the *lost!* For this work the young should *make time*, for when had youth time to be wise? Let no one say, "I am too old for the work of agitation"—remember, better late than never! to assist to tear sinners out of the hands of the Devil. We speak forth the words of truth and soberness, when we remind you that, "the whole world lieth in wickedness." *Lieth in the wicked one*—is embraced in the arms of the Devil, where it lies fast asleep and carnally secure, deriving its heat and power from its foster-father. What a truly awful state! "In this short expression," says Mr. Wesley, "the horrible state of the world is painted in the most lively colours; a comment

[illegible] we are [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] men [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] Christian [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] must [illegible] [illegible] Himself [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

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Mark the reply:—

"*Watchman-office, February 6th*, 1857.

"SIR,—In the absence of the editor thro' illness, I beg to inform you that it is contrary to our rule to insert advertisements bearing upon Connexional matters, without a copy of the work being sent for the editor's approval.—I am, sir, yours respectfully, T. J. MOYAN."

Brethren, no doubt but that patience is a virtue! But relative to the Wesleyan despotic system, tyrannising over our brethren, with us there is no question but that *hatred* is a greater virtue! If it had not been *written*, "Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord," our watchword might be *revenge!* But, however, this is our consolation, the conviction that the system is doomed of God, and that its execution is now placed in the hands of the *Private Members'* Discussion Society, as one part of its important *trust*. In taking our leave of you, our Wesleyan brethren, enslaved and degraded by the system, which you have heretofore supported, our earnest entreaty, if we have any trust in behalf of Methodism, is, that we charge you before God, to withdraw the whole of your support, of every kind and degree, from the Wesleyan antichristian system! You may depend on it that this will be one step in the right direction. But we do not, we cannot, wish you to divert that support in favour of any other existing system of Methodism; for we can discover no material difference, if we may be allowed the parliamentary term, between the tory and the whig officials in Methodism, at least, scripturally so. The tories and whigs have been conflicting together to little or no purpose. It must be the private members that must *do* the work, effect the *change*, if ever it is to be done. But the writer is desirous, anxious, that you divert your pecuniary support, withdraw it from any antichristian system, after the necessary expense to support the Private Members' Discussion Society, to one particular object, to be laid by in store, against a Providential opening in Methodism

as it should be, and to be reserved sacred for that purpose. *To send the Gospel to the heathen.* In you thus providing the means, fear not, God will raise up able and faithful messengers. There may be more in this idea than you may be enabled to comprehend, but by degrees. Why not this example be followed by every one of the Private Members' Discussion Society. Why not take it into serious *discussion*. Brethren, God has, indeed, put an honour upon us private members, in calling us to such a great and holy work, but He requires us to be *faithful*. Therefore, while we rejoice, we should rejoice with *trembling*. Let us bear in mind that God can do without the private members as well as the official members in Methodism. Therefore, the writer makes no account of his brethren, the private members, nor of himself, any further than we are found faithful to our God and Saviour Jesus Christ. He can raise up a church and people elsewhere, to carry on his cause and interest in the world. But, brethren, we are persuaded better things of you, though we speak thus, and things that accompany Methodism as it should be. But you will have need to *encourage yourselves* in the Lord, in the work now before you, now allotted you in his *providence*, to decide on, especially taking into account its being *singular*, different from others, perhaps, unexampled, or not common to others. Here is the great secret of encouragement: "Have faith in God." Mark xi. 22. Granted, under existing circumstances, without this encouragement, "It is easier to show twenty what it is right to do, than to be one of the twenty to do your own showing;" but, God being the subject of our faith, difficulties vanish, as we have firm faith, or confidence, in the power and faithfulness of God, to enable us to effect what we believe will be for His glory, and the furtherance of the work in which we are engaged—*have faith in God.* This exhortation, however, is not to be considered as being exclusively given to our Lord's Apostles, and first disciples: it is also given to us, and to all His true followers, to the end of the world. We are all, here, exhorted to have a steadfast faith in the power, love, and faithfulness of God; and to be fully persuaded that He will make good all His declarations, and fulfil all His promises, in their proper meaning, to all true believers in due season; and this, notwithstanding any difficulties, or apparent impro-

babilities which may be in the way. And it is on this foundation that we must approach God in prayer, fully expecting, if we ask such things as we are authorised by his word to ask, and are earnest, importunate, and persevering in asking them, that we shall certainly receive what we ask, as our Lord declares in the next words; even if the granting of our petitions imply God's doing what is really extraordinary, He having in all ages, on certain occasions, done what was truly miraculous, in answer to the prayers of his faithful people. Yes! to such, *every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain*; *and the glory of the* LORD *shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the* LORD *hath spoken* IT. Holy Writ is written for all times, and it rises in meaning as man rises in education and understanding. This is, properly speaking, the character of all true literature, which has a germ of development adapted for the age, and the persons to whom it is addressed. To conclude with the sentiment of the Apostle,—*And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.*

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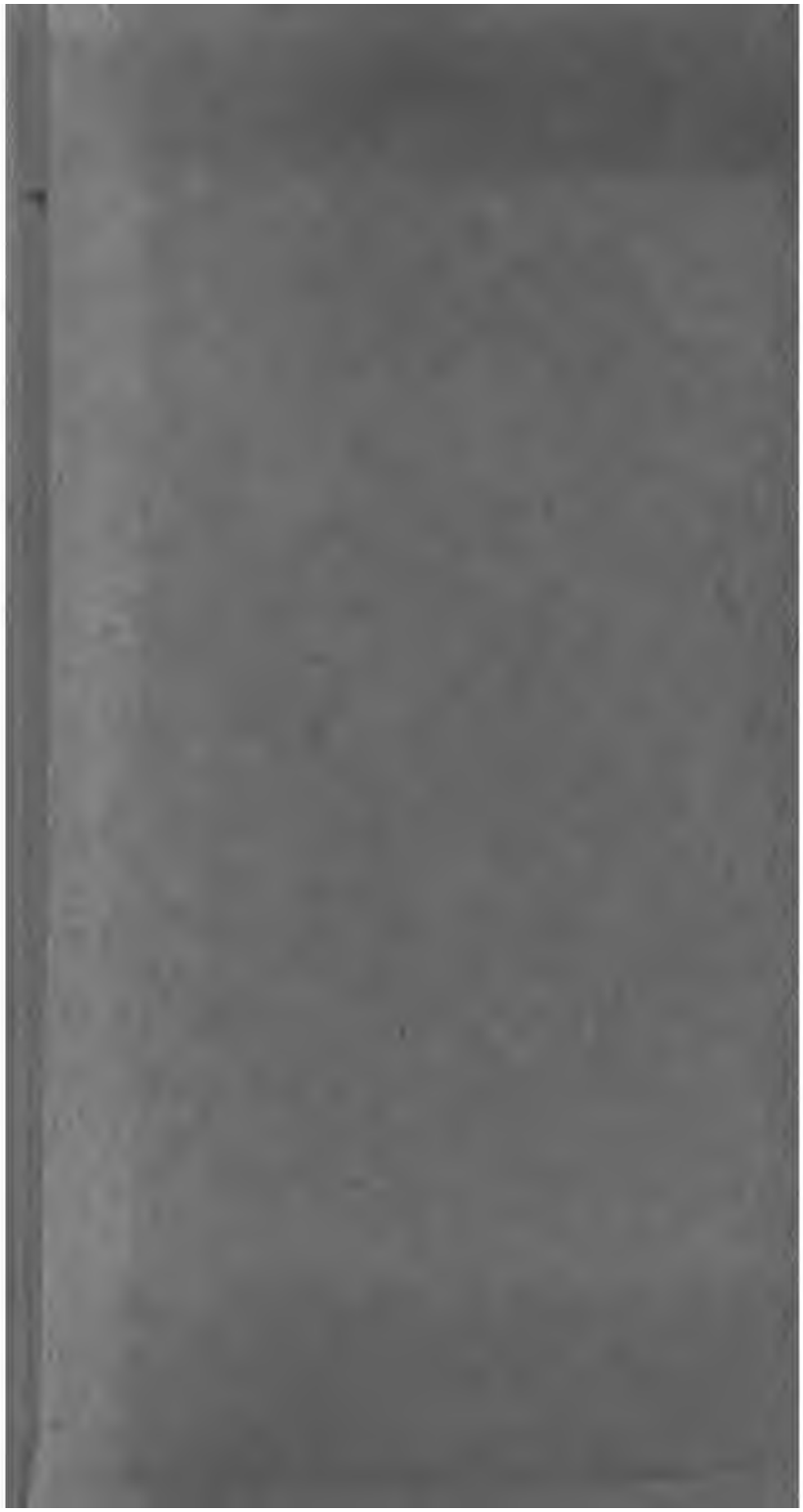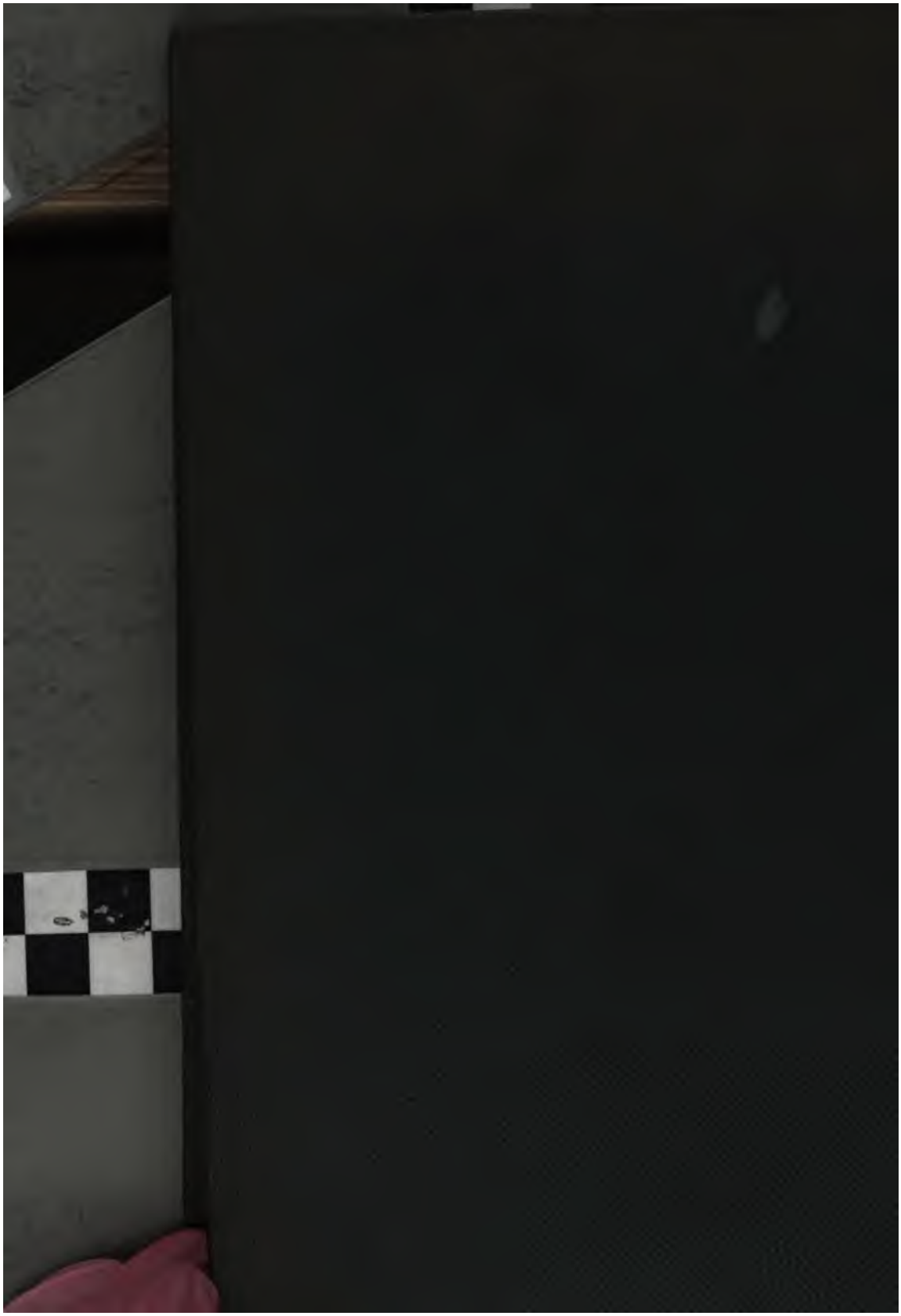
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